

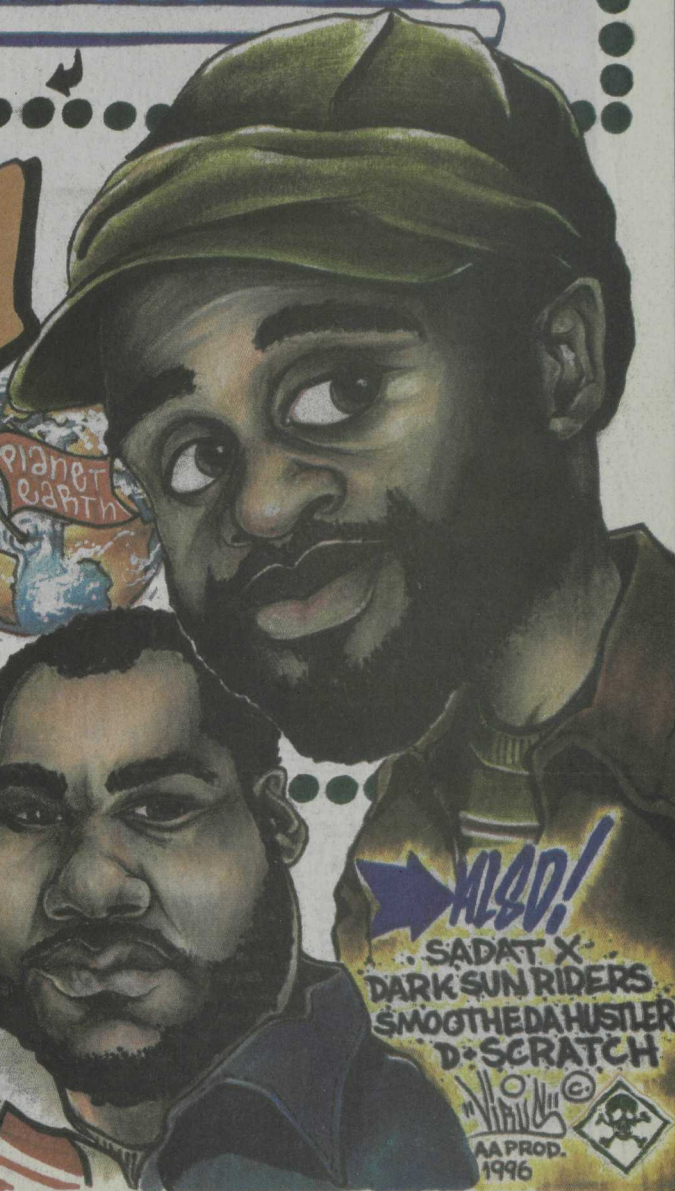
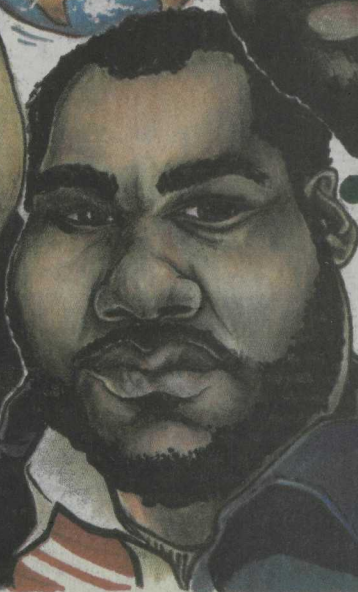
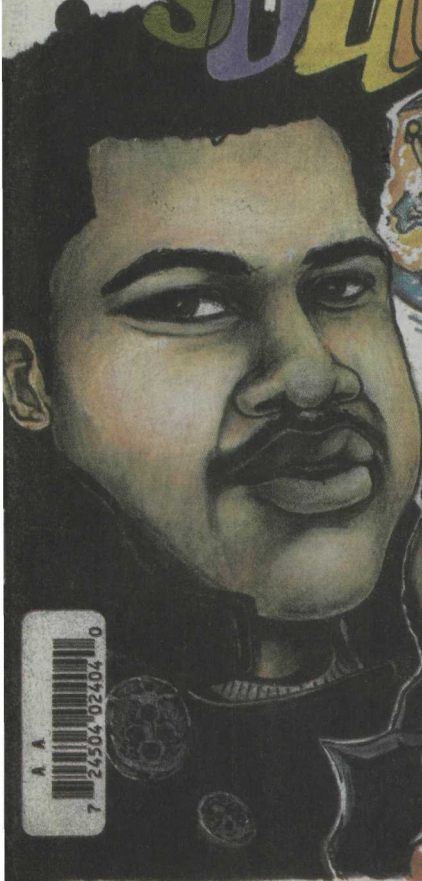
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• DARK SUN RIDERS •
• SMOOTHED A HUSTLER •
• D. SCRATCH •



AA PROD.
1996



FIRST THERE WAS NWA
THEN SOLD RELEASES BY
DR DRE, EAZY-E, ICE CUBE, MC REN

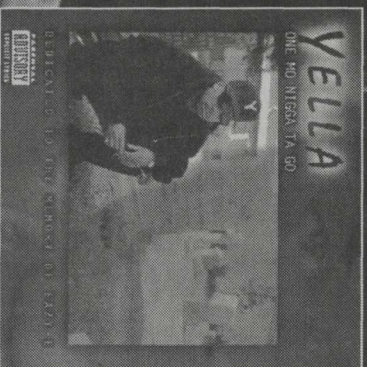
AND NOW WITH

ONE MO NIGGA TA GO

YELLA

DEDICATED TO THE MEMORY OF EAZY-E

APRIL 3 • 1996



ATTIC
Produced in Collaboration with N.W.A.





Dave has a problem... seriously.

elements

Elements is back to cold blast, back to cold blast niggahz from the squad tower. This shit takes a whole lotta work. I'm really glad to see it printed. One year has passed since we started Elements and we still can't get this piece out on time. Don't really care no more. I could care less about Chino XL. I told you to beware of the De La Virus... but you just didn't listen... Make sure you read that Dark Sun shit along with everything else. This magazine was printed on shit paper so don't forget to wash your hands.

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Editors

J Swing
Mr. Flipout

Layout/Production

J Swing & Flipout
Art Direction

AllCity Action Team

Contributers

Checkmate
DAY

FreeStyle Craze
Jeeps
Kemo the Labrat

Kilo-Cee
Logic
Mr. Bill

Photography

J. Stroud/D. Galloway

Publisher

Linda Scholten

elementary?

Due to the fact that too many people got too much to say and I don't got nothin' that's really stressing me too hard, the elementary column will now be reserved for the transcribing of the illest rhymes. This may include recent rhymes as well as old, over-looked rhymes. Feel free to write in if you got anything to say about my choices or if you have any suggestions. This issue, I'm featuring lyrics from Mobb Deep's Prodigy. I don't think he's underrated at such, but I do think heads don't realize how deep this motherfucker's gettin' nowadays. In my opinion, he's one the best lyricists of all time to join the likes of Rakim, Genius, Pharaoh Monch and those type of niggahz. Peep it.

Yo it's the P realistically speakin' you're left leakin'.
Reality bites back, I strike back, we're even
Ya still breathin', make sure his heart stop beatin'
Ya bleedin' on top the concrete found indecent
Blank out when I see you send shots at your cerebral
Go at your throat like a pitbull, stomp and feed you to the vul-
tures
Like Greek sculptures, you're left limless
From start to finish, you're whole squad get hittin' hard
I run with a foul type niggs that's war scarred resembling Vietnam
Infantry's the bomb
Your head niggah, head quarters we take over
My snake niggah crew strike like that of a cobra
Constrict like boas, wrapped tight your shoulders
You're closed in, trapped within the clutches of mad men.

- "Recognize & Realize" Part II Big Noyd featuring Mobb Deep

Combine the elements: Mobb Deep/RSO crime shit
Niggahz is left blindfolded, reminded how real shit can get
Live in [Tymet?] You would say New York City if you wanna be
exact
A soldiers story from Queens if you look closer on the map
Reptilians taught me how to bust my gat
Mentally fucked the god then left me to take my earth back
Time for revolutionary acts
Yo Hav, you [shuff?] the track, I'll find the facts
Now we got Illuminati all on our backs
Check and see if we do crimes and pay tax
The war is on no time to 'ax
Build an arsenal, got word back from apostle
Unoriginal man got plans colossal underlain'
Niggah get your shit straight
Fuck a pearly white gate all that bullshit is fake
The only gates I see is if they send the god upstate
Never that, I here to show the world where my head's at
Forever fed. To the Aryans on their death bed: a rebel
I wear the universal flag symbol
The positive and negative war will soon kindle
Buckin' at the government like Terminator 2.

- "The War is On" Almighty RSO featuring Mobb Deep

Elements Hip Hop Journal. Elements is a bi-monthly magazine published by the Student Radio Society of UBC.
Content - Elements will focus on all elements of Hip Hop culture. MC's, DJ's, B boying and Graffiti - on a local, national, and international level. The magazine features interviews, music reviews, and lifestyle issues pertaining to the Hip Hop community.
Editorial Policy - Elements jointly shares the CTR programming policy (ask Linda Scholten or Mike Hoffman @ CTR radio (604) 822-3017 for details) and encourages submissions from all members of CTR and the general public. Please ensure consistency with the magazine's underground theme for better publishing consideration (cause we don't print no dibby bullshit).
Submissions - Please forward all submissions (illustrations, flicks, essays, reviews, opinions, etc) to: Elements, c/o CTR, #233-6138 SUB Blvd, Vancouver, B.C., CANADA V6T 1Z1 or fax us at: (604) 822-9364.

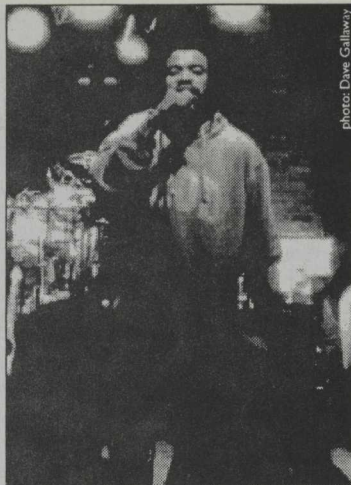


photo: Dave Gallaway

Black Thought of The Roots



photo: Dave Gallaway

The Fugees DJ Leon does some ziggyng



photo: Dan Pressler

Pos of De La Soul axes, "Whatever happened to the MC!!"

Metaphysics..

by Mr. Bill

This months column was inspired by the Rascalz joint "Clockwork".

Time and the clock. How do I slow it down? I can't stop it. I'm getting closer to death, but I want to drink of Time's colors - the prism of my existence.

(Kemo's intro) I dread time's passage and my squandering of the gifts and secrets of the universe. Time pays me no mind in it's endless cycle and expansion leaving me to my own peril. Conscious or unconscious, it goes on.

I wake up

(Checkmate) 3pm. Another day. Gotta get paid. I love this game. I live this game. I gotta get what's mine. How do I exist and grow in the grip of the beast called Capitalism. I can't front. Straight up, this is the real kid. No sellout. No doubt. Time to get my shit on.

(Red I) 6pm. Into the day. At my disposal I have power. Power comes from energy. Energy came from the unseen. The unseen houses my soul. When this bullshit is over the unseen and my soul will become everything. In the meantime my soul will become everything and harness energy from the unseen into thought and movement. But in order to get my shit tight it's bootcamp kid. Straight up discipline harnesses my thought and movement to the birth of revelation.

(Flipout) 9pm. Revelation manifests the unseen into the physical. The clock and my struggle with time are one of revelations forms. Analog, digital, circuitry, gears, electron movement - shadowy interpretations of all ruling time.

(Misfit) 12am. Beyond time. I can play gatekeeper opening and closing the darkness; cause I can run shit like a motherfucker through the power of thought. The challenge is keeping the darkness, the demons at arm's length. Time reminds me of the hour. They are strong and I am weak. I have not fully defined myself in the physical yet. I don't yet have enough discipline, my revelations are not yet fully focused. The darkness is still at the game. Tomorrow begins a new cycle and I'll take all comers.

(Kemo's outro) Harmony or balance unravels the physical. The 5 senses unravel time to a nothingness - textures, light, darkness, shadows within shades, shades within shadows. Unspoken, all play across my senses - sunsets, twilights, gaseous horizons and vaporous atmospheres.

Natural law's rhythms have a built in balance. I attempt to find it within Time's structure and rules. I get a shot at "it" everyday.

Peace to Checkmate for the real. Peace to Red I for the game plan. Peace to Flipout for the science. Peace to Misfit for the journey. Peace to Kemo for the unspoken. Much love to that nameless shorty who inspired all this to begin with. You all are a part of the "Clockwork" that is the structure of life.

WORD?



Sadat X and The Wild Cowboys at the "Hang Em High" video shoot

on Big Beat), Lord Digga changed his name to **Man Digga** and has "Man Digga Coming Through" on the flip side of the new **Artifacts** record "Art of Facts" (also on Big Beat), and **Paula Perry** has out "Paula's Jam" on I.N.C. Ent... The Mash Out Posse aka **M.O.P.** are also on the move, leaving Secret for Relativity. **A Tribe Called Quest** has released a promo only record called "Classics" as an appetizer for their upcoming single "Ince Again". Their album, *Beats, Rhymes & Life* is scheduled for a mid summer release... **House Of Pain** has added two new members, **Divine Styler** and **Cocni-O-Dire**. The flip side to their new single, "Pass The Jin", features Sadat X who drops one of his dopest guest appearances, no joke. Shit is called "Heart Full Of Sorrow"... **Rhyme Wrecka** from the Nexx Level club has signed to the independent label Loose Cannon... **Son Doobie of Funkdoobie** is in two porno's, not as an extra or a bullshit part but as the star... **Too Short** is saying he's gonna retire after his latest album, *Gettin' It* (Album Number 10), and become a preacher. Word!... In the latest Vibe mag, **Bobbito** gets Premier to reveal his old b-boy name: **WaxMaster C** on the floor and on the wheels... **Fugees**, **Beastie Boys**, **De La** and **Tribe** will be in San Fran June 15 to help raise money and awareness for the Dalai Lama's nonviolent effort to free Tibet from Chinese rule. Word!... And as if you didn't know by now, **BootCamp Clique's Smif N Wessun** was forced to change their name by some gun company. Go figure. So in the future keep a look out for **Coco Brovas**. Word... Summer albums to check for include **Helthah Skeltah's** *Nocturnal*, **Sadat X's Wild Cowboys**, **Shyheim's** *The Lost Generation*, **The Lost Boys' Legal Drug Money**, **Outkast's** *Atlans*, **Real Live's** *The Turnaround*, **De La Soul's** *Stakes Is High*, **Whodini's** *Six*, and **Above The Law's** *Time Will Reveal...* New 12 inch's to keep an eye out for are **Artifacts' "Art Of Facts"** on Big Beat, **Helthah Skeltah's "Operation Lockdown"** b/w "Da Wiggy" on Duckdown/Priority, **Trigger Da Gambler's** "Hitman For Hire" on No Doubt/Def Jam, **Above The Law's** "100 Spokes" on Tommy Boy, **Blahzay Blahzay's** "Pain I Feel" on Mercury, **De La Soul's** "Stakes Is High" b/w "The Bizness" featuring **Common Sense** on Tommy Boy, **Sadat X's** "Hang Em High" b/w "Stages And Lights" on Loud, **Bahamadia's** "I Confess" b/w "Three The Hard Way" on EMI, **I n I's** "Fakin' Jax" b/w "Props", **Camp Lo's** "Kill Em Softly" on Profile, **House Of Pain's** "Pass The Gin" b/w "Heart Full Of Sorrow" on Tommy Boy, **Xzibit's** "Paparazzi" on Loud, **The Roots'** "Sections" b/w "Clones" on Geffen, **Dark Sun Riders'** latest is "Time to Build" b/w "Vibes of the Pro Black" on Island (which is not available on the LP *Seeds of Evolution*)... Independent singles out are **PMD** and the **Hit Squad** with "Rugged-N-Raw" on Boondocks, **Whoridas'** (Saafir's boys) "Shot Callin'" and **Big Ballin'** on South Paw, **Hi-Tech's** "Book Of Life" on Mass Vinyl, **AI Tariq** aka **Fasion** (**BeatNuts**) has a record out with his new crew **God Connection** called "Do Yo Thang" b/w "Spectacular" on Correct, the **Jigmastas'** "Beyond Real" on Beyond Real, **East Flatbush Project's** "Tried By 12" on 10/30 Uproar, **Constant Deviants'** "Competition Catch Speed Knots" on Vestex, **Mr. Voodoo's** "Lyrical Tactics" b/w "Shine" which features his crew **Natural Elements** on Fortress, **Ak Skills'** "Check The Flava" b/w "Nights Of Fear" on Criminal, and **Pop the Brown Hornet** with "Black On Black Crime" on Smoke. WORD.



The INC. - Masta Ace, Man Digga, LeShea & Paula Perry

Mad, mad, mad, mad, mad, mad, mad, mad, mad respects to Rap Pages for their all DJ issue and for putting **Premier** on the cover. The issue is dope all the way through no doubt (and a crazy ass belated shout to Rap Pages for featuring Elements- this shit you're reading right now- in their underground "zine section") Word the fuck up... **Nasty Nas Escobar** is in the studio finishing his upcoming album *It Was Written*. Guests include his Firm Team (**AZ**, **Cormega** and **Foxy Brown**) and a duet with **Rakim** produced by **Dr. Dre**. What!! No shit!! **Word!**... The Dynamic Duo aka **Method Man** and **Redman** are gonna release an album together which is should be out later this year... **Slick Rick** is also finishing up work on his upcoming album... **Ice Cube**, **Mack 10**, and **W.C.** will be releasing an album together under the name **Westside Connection**. **Common Sense** didn't appreciate the comments Ice Cube made about his song "I Used to Love Her" so he took the subtle approach and recorded a song called, "The Bitch In You" dedicated to **Oshea Jackson**. **RZA** has just signed a major label deal for his **Razor Sharp Records** with **Epic**. The first release will be **Ghostface's** solo debut *Iron Man*. Others signed to his label include **Capadonna**, **Inspectah Deck** and vocalist **Blue Raspberry**. Eastwest is releasing the *America Is Dying* Slowly compilation featuring tracks about fuckin' and dyin' by **De La Soul**, **Sadat X** with **Fat Joe**, **7** and **Diamond D**, **Mobb Deep**, **Biz Markie** with **Chubb Rock** & **Prince Paul**, **Pete Rock** & the **Lost Boys**, **Organized Konfusion**, **Buckwild & O.C.**, **Goodie Mob**, **Wu-Tang Clan** (**Rza**, **Rae** & **Ghost**) and more... At the Rock Steady 19th Anniversary there's going to be a battle between the **X-Men** and the **Invisible Scratch Pickle**. If you've never seen these two crews do their thing there's a couple of videos to check out: **Fat Beats** presents *X-Men - In X-Erize #1* which features the current **World D.M.C.** **Champion Roc Raider**, **Rob Swift** and **Mista Sinister**, and **Turntable Wizardry Stage 1** featuring **Q-Bert**, **Shortkut**, **Rhettmatic**, **Babu** and **Melo-D** (which is more of an instructional tape)... **Master Ace** has left **Delicious Vinyl** and is now on **Big Beat**. His crew the **I.N.C.** have all recently released some underground joints. **Masta Ace** has a record out called "Top 10 List" b/w "Turn It Up" featuring **LeShea** (which was originally released on **Delicious Vinyl**, but will be re-released on the flip side of the new **Artifacts** record "Art of Facts" (also on Big Beat), and **Paula Perry** has out "Paula's Jam" on I.N.C. Ent... 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VINYL KONFLICT

interview by J Swing

Why don't you give a little history on yourself.

I started cuttin' in 1989-90. Hearin' people cuttin' on records listening to college radio shows kinda got me hyped up and I wanted to learn how to do it. Ever since then I've been working hard like any other basement DJ, trying to get the equipment 'cause it costs mad dollars to get into that stuff, and just working on the skills in the basement. That's where all the talent and all the ability comes from ya know, it's from hard work. Just being on the tables as much as you can.

Who's all in your crew?

We're called Turnstylez. It's myself, DJ Grouch and Lil' Jaz who is my cousin. We're like the main members and then you got Son of Soul who's down and some other people who we haven't hooked up properly. But us three and Son of Soul are basically the ones that make up the crew.

What's Turnstylez main focus?

To bring back the DJ element of Hip Hop, 'cause that's taken a back seat to all the MC's. The dancers and graffiti writers would have to say that they are takin' a back seat to the MC's too. It's not about the MC's or the rapper it's about all four elements and we're just trying to keep our element of Hip Hop alive. We want it to be appreciated just like a Method Man, or a Biggie Smalls, or a Saukrates. We want everyone to appreciate us just as much as the MC's 'cause the art has grown since spinning behind your back and stuff. It's gotten very funky.

How do you approach DJ'n, as far as learning new things and how much of an influence are crews like the X-Men or Skratz Pickelz?

Well, you can't help but pattern yourself after them because they are the ones leading the way. They're the ones going first and the farthest and leading the path. They are the innovators and you can't help go where they've gone, but in a sense what I try and do and what Turnstylez try and do is not go out and take a Roc Raider trick or take Q-Bert trick ya know. It's like you see it, you learn from it, then you make it a D-Scratch style. You make it a Grouch style. You make it a Lil' Jaz style. Were all different people and we're not going to do everything exactly like what we see.

"D-Scratch"



1996 D.M.C. Canadian Champion D-Scratch at the canadian finals

Speak on the DJ scene in Toronto for a minute.

There are a lot of DJ's who have mad skills. In terms of this type of DJ, the battle and showcase DJ's, there are a lot of people who have the ability to move forward but they don't have the knowledge. Maybe they haven't seen all the videos to learn different styles and stuff to move forward. "It Takes Two" by Rob Base and DJ E-Z Rock's "I wanna rock right now" was all they were exposed to so that's all they can raise their level too ya know. But there are a lot of cats out there who have skills and they just have to be knowledgeable about the art. They have to know where the scratch came from and they have to know who's doin' this now and who was the world champion before Roc Raider. Not a lot of people out here know who DJ Q-Bert is and that man's the bomb. If people out here saw Q-Bert behind two turntables they would say "Who is that?" That's pretty sad. People can name all kinds of MC's off the top of their head, but they don't know everything there is about DJ'n. Sometimes people get confused about body tricks and stuff like that, which I'm all down with that 'cause body tricks are great, I have them in my act too, but it's sound not sight.

So there aren't really any other crews in

Toronto that can test?

I wouldn't think so. I wouldn't think so. Not that I know of.

You mentioned the video thing, did you really heave on that when you started?

In the beginning yeah, when I started the videos were very important because I didn't really have nobody to look at and I didn't know what to do. What was the new thing? I didn't want to go into a competition and start doin' body tricks when that's not really what's goin' off. At the beginning, but once you get a certain base your basically on your own to learn everything else. Nobody can show you how to do the flare, it just gotta happen.

How would you define your style.

I like the word funky. That's how I would like to come off. With my beat juggling and the way I make beats and the way I cut I think it's kinda funky. To me if you can move your head to it, and even if he's doin' a trick and it makes someone say "Yeah, that was a funky trick", that's how I want to come off.

How often do you compete and how many battles have you been in?

I've been in many. Whenever there was one around the way I would make sure I was entered into it. You don't get many chances to get up on stage ya know. All those times when you were up in your basement and all those hundreds of hours you spent on your turntables, you don't get much chance to showcase your skills other than to your crew and your boys. So I tried my best to make sure I was in it.

How did you do in them?

My very first one I came third. Then after that there was a string when I didn't lose. Then a couple of summers ago was when I didn't really do that well in the Zulu Nation battle and that kinda set me back to the point where I wanted to prove myself. Then the DMC's came about and I took second in the Toronto eliminations, and then God blessed me and I was there to win the Canadian nationals in March.

How do you feel going into the D.M.C. World Finals?

I'm not going to fool myself and say that I can beat Roc Raider even though a lot of people have been saying I have a chance to but... that's going to be tough. I'd like to qualify to make it into the main group. That's my goal. My first goal is to qualify in the top 8 so I can go onto the world group, and if I'm there I have a chance to make some noise. If I finish top 3 I could see that happening too.

For any more info on D-Scratch call (416) 638-7979.

MIX TAPES

Kemo

"The Shit"

Kilo-Cee

"Mind Frame"

B-Mello

"Blowin' Up Worldwide" Vol. 1 & 2

Clue

"Spring Time Stick - Up '96"

S&S/Craig G

"Niggas Don't Give A Fuck"

Mister Cee

"Getta Grip Muthaphuckas"

Tony Touch

"Hip Hop #50"

Juice

"#30"

EQ w/ Rob One & Q-Bert

"The Master Mixes"

Three

"Underground Flowz"

Camilo

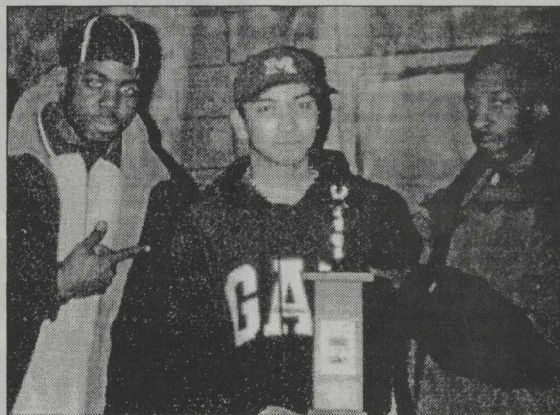
"Rap #14"

To get a hold of these tapes check your local Hip Hop spots or call Underground Mix Tapes at (206) 609-3347

1996 D.M.C. Canada Finals

by DAY

It's 1:35 in the pm on a Sunday afternoon in Toronto. I'm standing outside THE OZ, located in Toronto's downtown core, waiting to get inside where the D.M.C. Canada Finals started about a half hour ago. Luckily another organized Hip Hop function ran behind schedule (approx. an hour and a half) and I didn't miss a damn thing. Thank God cause Canada hasn't been included in the D.M.C. Competition since 1989 (#@!). John Bronski, from "Flava Street" (530 AM radio in Toronto), was the host of this year's D.M.C. Canada Finals and the turnout was phenomenal. The first contestant to impress me was this kid Lil' Jaz. Fast as a mutha, no doubt. Beat juggling back and forth and gettin' down on it, this kid definitely got the crowd hype. The next cutmaster to bless the name Technics was DJ Grouch. From tricks to disses to makin' beats, Grouch rocked the house. And you can't forget his cuts, his shit'll blow you out the box (check the Saukrates "Father Time" remix for a taste of his skills). There were six contestants in all at this year's competition which also included DJ's Tedious, Kid Koala, and Groove, all from Montreal. But as dope as these five DJ's were, they weren't enough to take first place. So going to Italy in June to represent Canada in the D.M.C. World Championship is Toronto's D-Scratch. Closing his eyes and playing his turntables, D-Scratch blew the crowd away giving his show soul. There was no question who the crowd favorite was this year. Along with clean cuts and ego trippin' (for good reason), D-Scratch had it locked down from top to bottom. Later on, after talking to D-Scratch, I found out that he, Lil' Jaz and Grouch are all part of the same crew called Turnstylez, "We're tryin' to keep the elements of Hip Hop alive, some people have forgotten about cuttin' and scratchin'". If you watch these guys in their element, you definitely won't forget it, these guys just took over the whole show (Lil' Jaz placed second and Grouch placed third). After the competition was done, last years D.M.C. World Champion, Roc Raider from the X-men, made a guest appearance representing lovely on the 1200's with fellow crew member Total Eclipse. Butta's. But as far as Canada goes... tight with the Bag a' Tricks crew (as they say, birds of a feather flock together), Turnstylez definitely seem to be Canada's finest in their field. If you disagree, you have a whole year to practice.



(l-r) Total Eclipse, D-Scratch and Roc Raider after the D.M.C. Canada Finals

In '95, after spending most of his youth in the streets of Brownsville, New York, Smoother Da Hustler decided it was time to turn his focus away from the street life and apply what he knew to the music industry. So, like many artists before him, he skipped the "Please Listen To My Demo" routine and took matters into his own hands. The first step was releasing "Hustlin'" on his crews independent label, Nexx Level. This resulted in major label interest and eventually a record with Profile Records. The next move was putting the now classic joint "Broken Language", which featured his brother Trigger Da Gambler, on the flip side of the "Hustlin'" single that Profile re-released on a national level. Not only did that track blow the spot and have heads from coast to coast trippin' for a second off the new "weed style" that they introduced, but it put him and his boys on the map officially. Now, after making all kinds of guest appearances on other artists tracks, Smoother has finally released his own album, *Once Upon A Time In America*, and is out to prove that he's not just another hustler turned MC.

- interview by J Swing -

What was life like before you started taking making records seriously?

The average fuckin'... the drug dealin', the con game, the credit card joints. All that shit, everything man. I was trying to do everything. Anything I could get my hands on at the time, or anything I can get into at that time we was doin' it.

What made you decide to concentrate on rhymin'?

Well, it took a while for me to really devote all my time to music. When I started recording with D.R. Period I was still goin' back out there. Rappin' was secondary and money was necessary. "Until I got incarcerated!" That shit is real, yknowwhat'im sayin? And that's exactly what



happened man. Then like when I came home, we started recording but I was always out there and shit. Then I started getting shows, and the shows kept me off the street for a minute. Then when we signed with Profile, and threw "Broken Language" on the b-side and it took off like that, I didn't really have no time to stay in the streets. So it was kinda gradually.

How did the "Broken Language" style originate?

We used to freestyle like that back in the days and shit when we were high or whatever. It's just like a real short way of a sentence. Instead of going all around the world to make one statement you just make the statement direct. The whole "Broken Language" thing we wasn't even concentrating on using that as no record or none of that shit. That was just how we was gettin' busy, but when we got the track from D.R. and shit and we started vibin' to it we was like "fuck it, let's do that." Do it real hard, make it street and take it back to the Hip Hop essence with no hook and none of that shit. But the "Broken Language" style, we been doin' that shit.

So initially you did the independent thing, releasing your own record.

Yeah, it was a double flavor joint. This group the Punishers, now there's only one of them, RhymeWrecker, but Punishers was on one side and I was on one side with "Hustlin'". It was called "Double Flava" and it had this...it looked like a pack of gum and was put out on Nexx Level and shit. That was like the independent vibe. Also before I had been incarcerated I had done two joints with D.R. Period. He was like "Yo, when you come home it's going to be on." Then when I came home it was like open arms. We started layin' tracks and it was over.

Why don't you break down Nexx Level and your whole shit.

Alright, boom! It's like this. Nexx Level is the company. Then we got Hill Players and that's my shit. That's like our whole clique, that's the name of our organization, Hill Players. In Hill Players is me, Trigger the Gambler, D.V. Alias Christ, Mad Pain, Retsam, and RhymeWrecker. We gonna make a ruckus, we're doin' a Ruckus album. That's our thing and we been doin' that for the longest. From before D.R. was even in the picture we was callin' ourselves Ruckus so that's gonna be in the makin' after everybody's album dropped. S.M.G., that's our get money mode cause it stands for Sex, Money and Guns. That was the code of the law when we was out on the streets, so we still keep that. Then we got mad little camps and shit cause everyone got there own little things jumpin' off as far as bringin' people on.

What and who influenced you growing up?

My pops and his homeboys. 'Nuff niggahz who drive they big Cadillac's and all that shit. That shit looked prop back in the days. Like boom, I'm bringin' it from the mentality part to the actual doin'. All that shit looked good. Niggahz that was hustlin', that was gettin' the fast money with all the jewellery on, that was the influence. I started bein' out on the street due to the fact that Ma Dukes was on welfare and shit, and she was hittin' me and Trigger off keepin' us dip, but she was spendin' all her money on our shit. We was like fuck that. We had props, we wasn't no punks so we started applyin' that shit to the streets. Plus we had niggahz that we grew up with that wasn't pussy that was just like "let's make it happen."

What MC's influenced you growing up?

Everybody. I'm a fuckin' fan. Just 'cause I rap and all that... I'm a fan. From Melle Mel and them, the Furious Five and Grandmaster Flash all the way through Rakim, Big Daddy Kane, KRS One, Public Enemy on up to the Wu, The Firm, Busta, Biggie, Junior M.A.F.I.A., I listen to all that shit. Das EFX, Jay-Z, I listen to all that shit. Just to be around that and in that environment, 'cause I was performing with them when I was running on an independent label. I was blowin' up shows and shit. All that shit was mad love and I fed off that shit. Niggahz gave me props yknowwhati'msayin', you gotta give a niggah his props if he's dope and niggahz was giving me my props so I was like "Yo, I know where it's at."

Speak on the album for a minute.

Once Upon A Time In America. It's a 14 cut album. It's pretty much an everyday livin'. Like I hit topics like how would it be without the dollar bill, how would it be in this world if there wasn't no money and everything was credit. I got this joint called "Murderfest" that's on some straight up gettin' down shit. The overall album is pretty much about like how everybody depicts hustlin' as negative and it ain't. Everything you do is a hustle.

I noticed half the album is on some "Broken Language", "Murderfest" street shit and then the rest is on some radio, almost borderline R&B type shit.

You know what? You can't be on just one thing 'cause you limit yourself. I don't have no limit to my skills so I'm like fuck that, my shit is universal man. I'm trying to touch motherfuckers in Ethiopia somewhere. I got the skills and all that shit is real to me, through the skits and all that. You don't hear no guns bustin' or none of that shit. That's Ma Dukes and my sister and all that. That's real shit. Everybody yelling keep it

Trigger Da Gambler

Occupation: MC

Label: No Doubt/Def Jam

Single: Hitman For Hire

Prod: D.R. Period

Crew: Hill Players/Nexx Level

Where did you get your name from?

I'm sayin' all my life, straight up life was nothin' but a 50/50 gamble. Triggers a reaction, I use Trigger for my life. My reaction is always quick 'cause I'm always on point yknowwhati'msayin'. So gamblin' is just my other life style yknowwhati'msayin'. What I like to do on the street, gamble to get doe. Hustle, whatever. That's how Trigger the Gambler came about.

How did you get with Def Jam?

I got the deal off of "Broken Language". I'm on No Doubt/Def Jam. It's Dante Ross' shit. He also manages Sadat X, DV Alias Christ.

What type of vibe are you on?

I'm on some old mafia, back in the day shit. The black gangstas. I'm basically on that more than anything.

What's the first single?

"Hitman For Hire", but I got a song on the Nutty Professor soundtrack called "My Crew Can't Go For That." That's like one of the singles that's coming out for the soundtrack. But "Hitman For Hire" is going to be the original single. We pressin' it up now so it should be out in May sometime. The album will probably be out in the summer, July or August. I'm probably gonna have Keith Murray on it, 'cause he's the only one I be workin' with. Keith Murray, Raekwon, Ghostface, those are the main heads that will be up on the album.

What about other people's shit?

I did stuff with ONYX, the "Purse Snatchers" remix, Blahzay Blah's "Danger" remix, Shyheim "What Makes The World Go Round", SWV "Your The One For Me" remix, Heltah Skeltah and Eric Serman off one of his compilation albums. Doin' other songs with other people is just keepin' me out there until my thing comes. Then when my thing comes I already got a buzz and people will already know all around. Catch everybody else fans and just push it from there.

How do you want to be remembered when it's all said and done?

I want to be remembered as a straight up brother, real to the game, that's just out here to do my thing and give the message to a lot of these people out here that's not waking up and realizing. These streets are nothin' but homicide thoughts, straight up. That's my message. I'm just tryin' to get out to the world so they'll wake up and realize what's goin' on right now.

real, keep it real, but that's as real as you can get. Shit stems from the household and that's what I'm taking it back too.

What's your definition of a hustler?

A hustler is a niggah, well I don't want to use the word niggah, a hustler is anybody who busts their ass to make things happen. Anybody that can turn a dollar into 10 dollars, and 10 dollars into 100, and 100 into 1000 and so on and so forth is a hustler. You gotta make your money work for you. You hustle and bust your ass to make money, but you don't want that to be your continuous everyday thing. Doin' the same thing over and over and it don't work, that's not a hustler. A hustler makes shit happen. A hustler let's his money make him money. He don't work for his money, his money works for him or her. Dedicated.

Name: Smoothe Da Hustler
Label: Profile
Album: Once Upon A Time In America
Prod: D.R. Period
Crew: Hill Players/Nexx Level
Home: Brownsville, NY

D.R. Period

Occupation: Producer

Crew: Nexx Level

Home: Brownsville, NY

When did you start makin' beats?

I've been producin' since I was 12, but on the real, I didn't start makin records until I was 14.

What got you into producing when you were 12?

Well, my brothers and them had a band. One of those bands that be in the basement practising for their weekend gigs. They had a group called Common Sense with BT Express and all of them. They used to be performing in my crib when I was younger.

What was your first record?

The first record that people recognized was Freedom Williams. That was my first record, "Groove Your Mind". It got big reviews on Billboard, cross over radio and all that. Then came Positive K's "Ain't No Crime", his second single. After that it was "How About Some Hardcore" and M.O.P.s album. Then after that it was Flatliners, "Mo Money, Mo Murder" by AZ, Shyheim, "Broken Language", I mean kid, the list goes on. Right now I'm just working on a lot of Nexx Level stuff, 'cause everybody in the clique got these deals now.

How do you go about makin' records?

You know when you do stuff so long it's just a natural situation? That's how it is. My format is basically depending on my artists. What ever my artists are good at, that's what I try and focus the music to. The artist got to have these three things that I look for and that's attitude, charisma and character. Those are the three main things that I look for in an artist. I can build the rest out of that. The rest is like minor. Those are the major three things I look for.

Who was your biggest influence on a musical level?

My boy is like Quincy Jones. He's like the man to me, on a music level 'cause Hip Hop is not all I do. I play keys, I play instruments so I do R&B too. I got a R&B group that I'm comin' out with in a second called Destination. I write, play and also arrange music too. The way he did music, and the way he formatted music and the longevity he has in the music industry... the visions he had, that's what I'm seein' now that I want to do. Do my Hip Hop thing, do my R&B thing and then do what ever else that's in store for me next.

And what's that?

In the future Nexx Level Entertainment is mergin' into a record company. We got a merchandising company, a promotional company. We got different divisions in Nexx Level, so that's the next thing.

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SADAT X

"The Wild Cowboy gotta a lot a style boy..."



In 1986 a sixteen year old kid named Derek Murphy aka Derek X was rhymin' around his block in the sections of New Rochelle aka the Now Rule, New York Bronx area. He was dreamin' of rockin' shows and doin' nothing but kick rhymes all day for a living ever since he first caught glimpses of Bambaata, at the infamous Bronx River parties and Harlem World functions. On top of those early hip hop experiences, Derek was also influenced to rhyme from watching another local New Rochelle MC already had made a name for himself, the Grand Puba Maxwell Dixon, who was making noise with Dr. Who and Don Barron with their group Masters of Ceremony. When that group went their separate ways after one album, Puba left and began working on his solo project. Around the same time, Derek X and another New Rochelle MC by the name of Lord Jammie were doin' the same. Around '86/'87 all three were working on separate solo projects so Puba took the initiative and suggested the three of them "come together and make a jam" and that's what they did. After that first song, which was never released, they flipped another track together and just kept going from there. So when Puba got his own record deal he put down his two counterparts and they formed the Brand Nubians and produced one of the most innovative albums ever, *All For One*. That 1989 debut album opened doors for many artists to follow as all three MCs lyrically were on some for real next shit along with beats that equally fucked with the lyrics, perhaps closing the now extinct "righteous era" of Hip Hop. The first single off *All For One* was the title track backed with Derek X's first solo joint called, "Concerto In A Minor." As well as those two tracks there was a remix of "Concerto" in which Derek X officially told the world to "never call me Derek cause it's not a righteous name" and thereon to be referred to as Sadat X Allah. He's still known as Derek around the Bronx and continues to follow the 5% but is quick to state that he also follows life. "Sometimes the teachings in the 5% don't coincide with what I'm doin'. I see a lot of the gods sayin' one thing and doin' another thing. That's not to say anything against the 5% because I love the 5%. I'm still involved with the 5% but it's just that I see a lot of the gods do different things."

With as much acclaimed Brand Nubian received at the time, Puba left the group very shortly after their last release, "Slow Down" to pursue a solo career of his own. Something he always wanted to do. Puba went on to record two solo records, *Reel to Reel* and most recently *2000*, both on Elektra, while Lord Jammie and Sadat released two albums as Brand Nubian, *In God We Trust* and the disappointing *Everything Is Everything*, also on Elektra. *In God We Trust* quickly diminished any thoughts that Sadat and Jammie couldn't hold their own without Puba. It built from the followings of the 5% and basically continued on from where the first Brand Nubian album left off. Both X and Jammie cooked beats and rhymes that are classic to this day such as the Diamond produced "Punks Jump Up", "Pass The Gat" and "Steal Ya Ho". After *In God* dropped, they set off to tour all over the US with some dates in Toronto and overseas then returned to the Now Rule to work on the third Nubian release, *Everything Is Everything*, in which Jammie handled most of the production. For loyal Brand Nub fans, the album was a bit confusing because the production didn't really correspond with the lyrics, especially Sadat's flow. One track on that album that undoubtedly shined was Sadat X's solo joint, "All Adat" featuring the mighty infamous Busta (who was just chillin' in the studio at the time) on the chorus and D.I.T.C. member Buckwild on the beat. Needless to say, Lord Jammie and Sadat went their separate ways after *Everything* dropped, Jammie went on



to work with his group Dead Presidents out in Brooklyn and Sadat X paid a leaving fee to Elektra and joined the all-star Loud roster.

In late 1995 "Loud Hangover" came out as the first project Sadat got down with on Loud, which had him partnered with the vocal terrorizer, Akynel (who apparently has been dropped from Loud). "That was an idea the label had since I had just got down with the label, Akynel just got down, Yvette Michelle also. And Flex, he had that mix tape concept goin' around so he just asked us if we wanted to get down and we was like, "cool." And we just did it." FunkMaster Flex went on to remix the song utilizing an old Brand Nubian beat, "Step To The Rear" and the joint burned up the clubs.

We now move to the present. 1996 is the year and Sadat X is ready to dropped his debut solo album, "Wild Cowboys." The album is guaranteed to dispel any notions that Sadat couldn't pull it off as a soloist as his latest work proves to outdo any of his counterparts solo attempts to date. Being a soloist seems to be the best arena for Sadat as he declares, "I get to control solely, what music I want to do. I don't have to ask anybody, I can do whatever I want to do." As far as lyrics go, ever since Sadat's introduction the Hip Hop soundscape as one third of Brand Nub, he's been schooling the heads with super fresh styles and rhyme cadence that other MCs wouldn't think to try. "When I rhyme, the bald headed one reveals, I think about what people would expect me to say and try to do the exact opposite." As far as lyrical content, "I basically just try to rhyme by what I see and what I deal with everyday. I don't try to make it nuttin' more that it is cause it ain't nuttin' more that it is. Word up."

The Wild Cowboys is originally the name of the notorious drug gang that ran the streets of New York around Columbus, Manhattan Avenue, Amsterdam Avenue all the way to Broadway. They existed from around 1989 to just under two years ago, most of them now either met their maker or have been incarcerated in double digits. The new Wild Cowboys are a posse of MCs consisting of some unknown but soon to be well known, rhyme slingers including Cool Chuck, Tech and Sadat's protegee, Sean Bliggety aka Sean Black who is all over the album droppin' shit like the cattle all over the tracks. Sadat also rolls with some other crews such as, "Desperados", and his Bronx posse, "High Plains Drifters" and another crew from "around the corner", "HDM." A relatively unknown crew from uptown known as the Money Boss Players, stroll into town and accompany Sadat on one joint, "Game's Sober" for a lyrical shootout, simply adding to the overall potency of the project. As far as production on the album, the backdrops for Sadat and company's rhymes are provided by some of New York's finest tracksmiths, including himself and also D.I.T.C. members: Buckwild, Diamond D, ShowBiz and OG; his childhood partner Alamo (who's family has known

each other datin' back to their grandmothers, he's got baby pictures with Alamo); Minnesota; Father Time and a last minute piece with Pete Rock as the icing on the cake. Overall, the album depicts a wild western mentality against the prairies of the South Bronx, essentially entailing the necessity to acknowledge the excessive lawlessness and gunplay going on throughout the uptown areas of the New York City and beyond. While Sadat chose to use this scenario for the basis of his album, some may recall the Fugees track, "Cowboys" which one cannot escape the question of, "are they dissin'?" Sadat is quick to point out, "They know who it's directed to and who not to. I've know the Fugees for a long time and I ain't got no beef with them and they're not directin' it towards me in no way. I know that. [People] are lookin' for beef but there ain't no beef. Naw, I won't even let it escalate to no beef like that. In fact, I was supposed to a joint with Lauryn but we couldn't ever hook up. Yknow, we were supposed to knock something out together." The whole situation could be easily summed up to any over zealous beef seekers, don't believe the hype. When asked what he does have beef with he responded, "Basically it's the east coast/west coast. I mean, it's perpetrated by a few. It's not the general consensus of the masses, it's just a few from both coasts that perpetrate this negative thing and try to keep it goin'. To me, it's totally bullshit but it's more of a young mentality thing I think. And just hope people grow outta that, yknow."

Sadat X is definitely on the verge of dropping a classic Hip Hop album to add to the others he has already offered. This could be his last album or it could be the start of a new beginning. Almost ten years deep in this rap game Sadat has not only made his mark but opened doors as well in the next few years we all wait to see what's to unravel. Sadat feels that Hip Hop will survive whatever it has to go through and perhaps go back to the consciousness that Brand Nubian helped shine when they first came out. "I think rap is here to stay but everything comes around again. There'll just be a next phase of rap... something that'll come around again. It might be back to a righteous phase again, yknow what? msayin', cause that was one phase in '88/'89/'91. There was Blackwatch and this and that and everybody was on some cultural awareness. Then it shifted to the gangsta mode, then the player mode. So I don't know, maybe it'll shift back to the righteous mode."

Artist: Sadat X
Label: Loud
Album: Wild Cowboys
Prod: D.I.T.C., FatherTime, PeteRock, Minnesota
Crew: Wild Cowboys
Home: New Rochelle, NY

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De La Soul is in the house once again. With three innovative albums under their belts since their debut in 1988, they're ready to release *Stokes Is High* for 1996. The trio came to Vancouver in April finally, after being a no show over a year ago that left a bad taste in some Vancouver heads' mouths. I got the opportunity to chill with Dove, Pos, Mase and their road manager Miguel in their hotel room at the Grandville Chateau, Best Western. Here's what's up with De La AND the Native Tongue situation and lots of other fun tid bits...

What happened last time?

Dove: Yeah. We got stuck at the border. Big misunderstanding.

ing between selves, the promoter and obviously the border. The workin' papers weren't set there for us when we got there so we got stuck waiting to see what was happening, tryin' to make the show actually. But when we got there we kinda found that people was on their way out so...

They got maced and all types of shit...

Dove: Yeah. I heard, I heard. So we're finally back today to do it right this time.

Word. So what's the new album gonna be called?

Mase: (very well rehearsed) The new album is entitled, *Stokes-Is-High*. It will be released June 18th in a store near you. The first single is entitled "The Bizness" featuring Common Sense.

Word.

Mase: Mmm hmm.

Why is it called *Stokes Is High*?

Dove: I guess we've always had a whole storyline intertwined with what the albums stood for but I mean, this time around we're just doin' some songs, just feelin' it. The title is basically just sayin', time is runnin' out. It's time to take things a bit more seriously and do your thing. And for us, *Stokes Is High* meant we need to get into doing our album the way that we feel we should do it. We recorded the album by ourselves this time Prince Paul didn't do no production on this album. We got some outside producers, we got a brother by the name of Spearhead X out of Atlanta; a brother named O.G. whose down with the Diggins In The Crates crew; D who is managed by Q tip, he's outta Detroit; and Skeff Anslem. We got four outside producers and the rest of the album we did ourselves. Like I said, it's a cool out album, just listen to it and just chill kind of album. It got songs touching bases on every angle; freestyling kinda thing; a song about girls; got another song touching on the atmosphere in Hip Hop music today; we got a song with Common Sense which is called "The Bizness", that's the first single that's comin' out; we got the r&b group Zhane, they did a song with us; we got two new brothers, one by the name of Most Def and the other by the name of Ain't No Lie who's on two separate tracks on the album with us.

The last album, *Baholone Mind State* was a kind of cool out album too though...

Dove: The last album was like a confident album, just doin' our thing, just relaxin' and doin' songs, we felt like

we always done, we should do it our way. So it was a good album, it was a cool out album. This album is more or less on the same route, you know cool out, relaxation, enjoying album, not too much of, "what did he say? I gotta write that down so I can decipher it." So it's a little bit more understanding, we brought the tone down on the metaphorical sense.

You especially right?

Dove: Yeah yeah yeah. Right!

(Dave chuckles a bit then there's a little pause. Then Pos and Mase crack up in laughter)

You guys seem to have such long intervals between your albums...

Pos/nuos: We usually don't wait long though. It's just that we're very fortunate enough to do a lot of touring. So, a lot of times when the album come out, we on tour not only in the United States but we're very fortunate that a lot of different countries are really into De

La Soul. We'll be in Japan, Australia, Germany, where have you. So instead of doing two big shows

in

say: Europe,

we'll really hit a lot of underground areas and big shows. So

we try to give them just as much love as much as we give the states love so that's why it usually seems like it's taking us a long time for us to come out with our album but it's really not. We're just really bustin' our ass around the world and then we'll come home and then you know, do the album. So that's really the deal.

When you went to release the second album and kill your whole D.A.I.S.Y. age image, did Tommy Boy trip and stuff?

Pos: Tommy Boy never tripped as far as like, "What are you doing!?" They'd give their little subliminals, "Well look, you know if you do this, it's not going to be as visually appealing as..." And we were like, "Yeah well whatever." That's what really what happened from then on in. So you really felt like you need to kill that shit huh?

Pos: Well I mean, it had to be done. In a lot of respects, the D.A.I.S.Y. age, if you had taken it to mean DA Inner Sound Y'all, that's what our music is now. It's still like that cause everything we do comes from within ourselves but the whole visual aspect of it all, with the whole daisy, we just put that to a cease. Because, you know, I think a lot of people is understanding the plan: it shows you that De La Soul has stayed around for a very long time and I think that really couldn't have been too possible with an image like that. Any image really. So that's why we took the chance in doing it and I think it's paid off. But if people had listened they would have heard you say all of that in "Me, Myself and I."

Pos: But people don't listen. They hear. They don't listen.

So what happened to Shorty?

Dove: Shorty is... her campgrounds more or less moved on. She definitely was one of the extra added attractions on the last album. You know, we tried to do a little something with her, it really didn't work out so she more

or less moved on to a different camp and started working with some other producers. Actually, she's working with the BeatMinerz and what I understand something is supposed to be happening with them but she's pursuing her career, doin' her thing. So you know, best of luck to her.

What about China and Jette?

Dove: They're chillin'. I not too sure if China was in college or she was going to school or if she finished school or what but she's still around the neighborhood, I see her all the time. Jette is still around the way, workin' doin' her thing. So everybody's just chillin'.

Word. I heard KRS One say that "image sells records" or something to that effect and that sounded strange...

Pos: Well, in a lot of respects an image does sell records. Regardless of how dope Method Man is and ODB is and how ill he is, it's his character- even though that's his natural character- you're buggin' off of ODB's character, not his lyrics. So that's why when you get the whole image of whole Wu Tang comin' together to present you with the whole Shaolin and the whole karate thing, that helped build on to the fact when you just put that aside, you can really go, "Method Man got skills." But you got a lot of people who wouldn't have paid

attention as quickly without the image. No different from

De La Soul.

We

got

lyrical

skills,

really

maybe

attention

we can do

good production but

lot of people wouldn't have paid

as us as quickly as they did if they didn't see the whole D.A.I.S.Y. age image. So in that respect, I can't dis that whole image that naturally came around us like that. Right, right. So I heard Prince Paul isn't involved on this album.

Pos: No, he didn't do any tracks for the new album.

How come?

Pos: It's really not nothing bad or anything. It just turned out that way. At one point he was very hectic with his whole Gravediggaz things... it's really where Paul wanted it to go in a lot of respects. If I can recall back from the second album, there was times when he was like, "Yo man, I really want y'all to know what y'all are doin' so I can just do what I gotta do in this." But we were really like, "C'mon, get down with this album." It wasn't like, "Yo! We movin' you out." It wasn't even on that level, it was something that he wanted really cause... you know... (laughing) he's gettin' old! So, he wants to just chill but it was cool.

On "Ring ring ring" Mase said, "Yo Pos does the producin'" So how is it actually divided up?

Pos: Well, we all produce. If you can just go through favorite joints...

Okay, who did "Eye Patch" who did that one?

Pos: I did "Eye Patch." It's like, "Oodles of O's", Dave did; "Shwingalokate" Mase did; "Afro Connections" Mase did; "Potholes" we all did together; "I Am I Be" Paul did; "Ring Ring Ring" Paul did; I mean, there's always different levels, with the group you know, Dove will do a track, I'll do a track, Mase'll do a track and we'll all add our little

"So that's really the essence right there, of the Native Tongues. Us, Jungle and Quest, cause that's who we're naturally around and we don't have to be staged."

bits and pieces to it. I'm just sayin' that it was always like that with Paul. Unfortunately a lot of people thought maybe Paul was just doin' all the producing. But we all do the producing.

Was "Millie Pulled a Pistol On Santa" a true story?

Pos: Yeah. Not the actual story, in it's sense of how it went down but it was from a situation where a friend of mine went through it and from me buildin' with Dave. He also knew someone who went through that whole situation, so we just made a song out of it.

That was a lil' Ill song. Why do you make songs of that nature?

Dove: It's life. I think people just always tend to... I guess if "life" right now in Hip Hop is about shooting and killing, that's what everybody'll want to talk about. If life in Hip Hop is about bein' a rebel and talkin' about the revolution then that's what everybody's gonna do. For us, we like to touch topics that other people aren't. So it was like, "Why not? Why not talk about someone in the family gettin' raped or incest or whatever kind of situation."

Right. And was "Tread Water" an environmental joint?

(Mase starts laughing)

Dove: That was just some zany... nonsense about animals... Yeah, we was smokin' air at the time so...

The whole question with killing your image- you went on to say on your second album,

"Tommy Boy

wants another

Say No?

Yeah right."

I thought "Say

No Go" was a good

song...

Dove: Yeah, we realized that. It's no big deal, it's just a statement. Just like sayin', "Arsenio dissed us, but the crowd kept clappin'." It's not a disrespect to them it's just-

Is that when you were on his show and he introduced you as "the hippies of Hip Hop" when you guys had done told everybody to not call you that?

Dove: It's not even that it's...

Pos: Naw. We started performin' and the credits start rollin' and the show was goin' off air.

Dove: It was just a lot of things. I guess Hollywood period, is you know, "Let's get the job over with" and you know, "Hi, how ya doin'?" Okay, get the fuck outta here. Next act." So it was that kind of a treatment behind the camera, so we felt kind of offended knowing that we respected what he did and knowing that we watched the show every night as possible. But it was like we felt like, "Okay, we've come to do your show, maybe you could just say whassup..." and not chillin' with him or hanging out with him, going nowhere with him like to a club or nothin' like that, just him giving his respects. He more or less brushed us off. So it wasn't disrespectful even in sayin', "Arsenio dissed us" it's just sayin' what he did. And just the same like sayin' that Tommy Boy wanted to hear another "Say No Go"/"Me Myself and I" type of song from us. In anyway it's not a dis to them, it's just statin' the facts.

(At this point Mase, who's been relatively quiet since he did his "part" at the beginning of the interview), turns up the volume on the TV as something strikes of interest to

him.)

How have your record sales been?

Dove: They did definitely decrease each album. The first album went platinum. In the states it went platinum so obviously, throughout the world, including Canada, it must be like, three times platinum or whatever the case may be.

Are you guys feelin' that?

Dove: Yeah, I mean that's cool. We've been travellin' abroad since day one, so it's kinda cool to sell records out of the states, just to know people appreciate it. *De La Soul Is Dead* went gold. *Bahloone Mindstate* supposedly went gold but I'm not sure of the exact number so I mean... it's not a platinum 3 *Feet High And Rising* record but we're just pleased that people are still lovin' us.

Word. How more albums are you going to record?

Dove: We have a seven album deal with Tommy Boy. To say if we'll be doin' all seven, that's for the future yaknowhat's sayin'. I don't know what that's gonna hold for us. We're on our fourth now. If anything, we plan on puttin' out's *Greatest*

Hits, maybe

like the sixth album

or something like that. We

was talkin' about just doin' some of

bugged out shit, maybe like a kiddie album or

something like that.

For real though?

Dove: Yeah, just tossin' things around, you know...

You guys each got kids though right? How many each do you have?

Pos: One. One daughter.

[Pos] You're daughter talks on "I Am I Be" right?

Sayin' "I be a little sista."

Pos: Naw, naw, naw. Actually that was her little aunt talkin'...

What about Mase? (Still watchin' TV) Whassup Mase? You got kids?

Mase: What! Oh sorry man, it's one of my favorite shows... yeah I got two sons.

So for real. A kid album?

Dove: Yeah, we've been talkin' a lot about a lot of things. Definitely a greatest hits album: a kiddie album; a rap instruction album; we don't know...

KRS One has got that book out now...

Dove: Oh yeah, *The Greatest Book in the World*.

(Laughing) Is that what it's called?

Pos: Naw, that's just what I called it...

Dove: Science Of Rap. It's a must. Musty. Musno...

You all under the same stage names still?

Dove: Yeah. Everybody got their different aliases. *Yaknowhat's sayin'.* Mase went from P.A. Scratchmaster Mase to Maseo to Baby Huey to...

Pos: ...to Mr. Burnstein.

Dove: ...to Mr. Burnstein. (with heavy emphasis on the "Burn")

Is that what he is now?

Dove: Everybody just basically knows us as Plug One and Plug Two

Pos: Everyone always knows it's De (referring to himself) La (lookin' over at Dove.)

Mase: De La and Soul (himself) (Starts laughing like a

maniac)

Pos: Word.

Dove: Or we're known as A Tribe Called Quest Word?

Dove: Yeah! Uh, just in like, Colorado.

Mase: I'm Phife Dawg.

Who rhymed on "Bittles" with you two?

Pos: Oh the girl! That's LeShaun, Almond Joy.

That's LeShaun, LeShaun! "Doin' It" LeShaun!

Pos: Yeah.

Was that "Bittles" scenario some true life shit too, like with the Tracey Chapman shift?

Dove: Oh yeah. That whole setting of the song was from an experience that Mase had our first day out on the LL tour back in '89.

I think he went to a McDonald's

or a Burger

King or

something

like that and they

weren't givin' him any light or

nothin' like that to take his order. And

then when somebody pointed him out as De La

Soul, they were like, "Oh yeah!" Mase was like, "FUCK you!" and splashed water in they faces.

How did you hook up with Teenage Fan Club to do, "Fallin'?"

Dove: That was cool. It just like any other project that's thrown in our faces, "Do you wanna do a soundtrack?" sort of thing. Teenage Fan Club, we didn't know anything about them and it was just like, "We wanna pair you up with one of these bands." And we had a choice. At first we picked Living Color but they said Living Color wasn't doing it and then we found out Living Color was doing it, they just didn't want us to do it with Living Color.

Pos: They wanted Living Color with Run DMC.

Dove: Naw, I think it was more than that too-

Pos: They wanted us with Teenage Fan Club. (Yaknowhat's sayin'?)

Dove: I think two forces wanted us with Teenage Fan Club definitely... So when we flew over there we went to Gladscow I believe and just hung out with them for two days and did the song.

So here's the question of the decade, what's up with the Native Tongues? Pos, I heard you state in an interview that it was all about not seeing each other ever or something...

Pos: I mean, yeah at that time that's what it was all about, between Afrika (Baby Bam), Q tip and myself and even beyond that yaknowhat's sayin'. A lot of people who I felt... you know, they'll come through and we'll put them down cause we always try to help other out, and then when they get down and they go off and shout out their little crew that they was waitin' to put on. Ain't nuttin' wrong with that but... it's really just about us being regular human beings makin' mistakes and whatever, and us being young, growin' up- we all down... I mean, us and Quest always stayed more intact but now Jungle has come back more into the picture and I'm really happy about that. Even before we came on the road, we been meetin' together and trying to figure out what we trying to do together and hopefully do some touring together. Cause us and Quest is definitely droppin' at the same time and Jungle's in process of finishing up their album as well. So that's really the essence right there, of the Native Tongues. Us, Jungle and Quest, cause that's who

"We was talkin' about doin' some ol' bugged out shit, maybe like a kiddie album or something like that."

we're naturally around and we don't have to be staged.

What happened to Black Sheep?

Dove: Their album came out man, and it just didn't, just didn't do it.

Pos: I heard they pretty much parted, I guess. I think Dres is gonna do a solo album or something like that? Really?

Pos: At one point I heard Dres was gonna do a solo album and then Lawnce was gonna do some of the beats but I don't even know if that's really happening- as far as Lawnce doin' the beats- but I think Dres is doin' a solo album.

I don't think Lawnce really should've started rapping, in my opinion...

Pos: Well... it happens...

Did you have to ask permission to do "Ego Trippin' Part II"?

Dove: Naw. Ultramagnetic was one of our favorite groups, Mase did the track and it was just an idea that had of borrowing snippets from everybody else's rhymes and compiling them to make a song... So it was, I mean for us it was just a tribute to people we admired yknowwhat'insayin'.

You two have done that a lot in your songs, like splicing in other peoples lyrics...

Dove: A lot of Run DMC stuff most of the time. For me, that's like who made me wanna get into rhymin' more seriously.

Run DMC for being like ourselves, what we do, just doin' what they do, period.

Like a DJ

and two MC's.

Dove: Yeah exactly. Ultra and Run and them was, for me...

Pos: Ultraaa... magnetic.... Ultraaa....

Have you heard his new shit?

Pos: Octagon?

Dove: Naw, I haven't heard it yet.

He's a strange man.

Pos: Oh he's very.

De La has been around for a long time, and probably you've been around a long time before you came out right? So for you guys to have gotten so far, the goal isn't really about sellin' crazee records, cause to really get your props, that doesn't matter really, at all.

Dove: Right right. I think that's the part of basically, the over saturation of Hip Hop, as far as MC's comin' out. It's like everybody just wanna do it for the hell of doin' it cause they see people being successful at it. I think a lot of MC's who are up and comin' are like, "I wanna rap!" and that's it. I think you gotta live with it, love and know it to an extent to really get far with or even just to contribute to it. For a lot of brothers to come out is like, "I just wanna rhyme because I know LL lived two blocks away from me so I can do it to." So it's definitely a part of the demise of Hip Hop in this day and age. Everybody thinks that they can just rhyme.

Part of the demise? So it's goin' down?

Dove: Yeah, I mean, Hip Hop is definitely goin' down, you can tell... It's not just by the outside working in, on breaking up Hip Hop, it's the inside actually doin' it themselves, yknowwhat'insayin'. It's like, other groups tryin'

to battle each other, the west coast sayin' this or that, the east coast... and it's like, it's become nonsense. When at one time it was community and what you did was just chill out in the basement or partying, just rhyming, it was friendly battling. So, like I said, not only is the forces on the outside trying to break Hip Hop up, a lot of assholes on the inside are doin' it themselves.

Being from New York, does it make you upset that some people are dissing the place it was born?

Dove: I mean, I wasn't there in the days, I don't know but as far as the history of rap goes, it probably did start in the east. But I'm not going to say that it's supposed to stay there. Anybody who does Hip Hop is just doin' it. Hip Hop isn't territorial, it think it just becomes inside of you and what you do and what you make out of it is what it becomes. I mean, I think there are people who are destroying it but... it did start in the east, from what I know. If it branched out, so be it.

Artist: De La Soul
Label: Tommy Boy
Album: Stakes Is High
Prod: De La, Skeff Anslem, J.D. & Spearhead X
Crew: Native Tongues
Home: Strong Island, NY



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DARK SUN RIDERS

"In the valley, in the seas, I can hear it in the breeze...
Dark Sun Riders firmly handle it..."

Brother J is serious. Serious about lyrics. Serious about beats. Serious about Hip Hop. At a point in time where Hip Hop is a multi-million dollar industry handing out platinum records left and right, the content and quality of 90% of these platinum groups is garbage and lyrical content and originality are at a low level. Sound absurdly ironic? Maybe. Or it could be extremely predictable and intentional. Whatever it is, shit's deep. In fact it's "deeper, deepest Atlantis sub basement" deep. Brother J aka the Vibal Magus of Evolution aka the universal god "the revival of the jimmy hats and cause we brother,

Tehun is back to shed light and start raw and rugged." So put away the dust off those old thinking caps headed back to the east my teachin' gods to be.

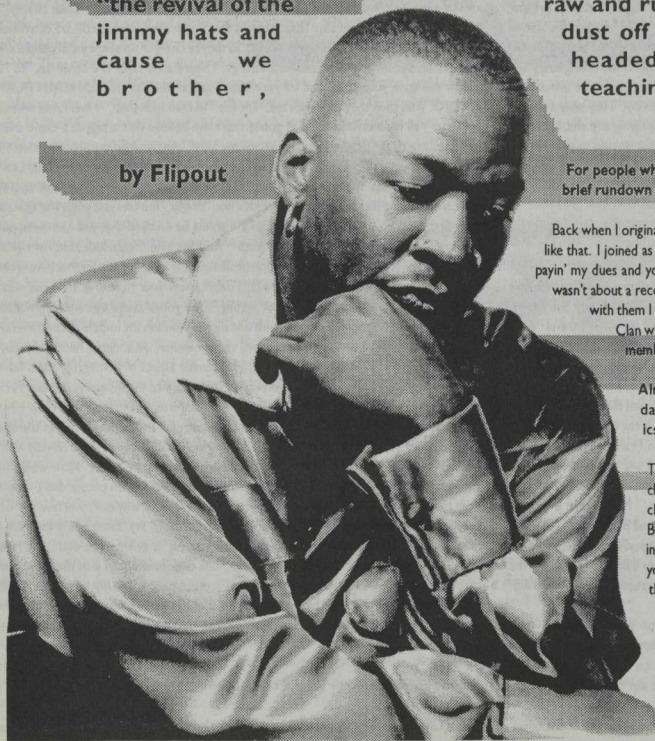
by Flipout

For people who aren't familiar with you already, can you give them a brief rundown of how you started out.

Back when I originally hooked up with the X Clan in probably about '88, something like that. I joined as part of the security team on Blackwatch and that's where I was payin' my dues and you know, layin' it down. I had the verbals and everything but it wasn't about a record deal for me even then, you know. So from there, hookin' up with them I demonstrated my talent and continued on in the group called X Clan which was originally me and brother Shaft and then we took in the members, Professor X and Architect.

Alright, let's talk about today's audience, do you feel today's rap audience are really listening to the quality of lyrics?

The people are not keeping a good ear nowadays. They're not checkin' for lyrical form anymore. Ya gotta keep a good ear. They're checkin' for where you come from, "if you come from homeboy Biggie or homeboy, you know, Wu or whatever then I'll take you in but if you're not down with a name then I'm not with you." If you're not doin' the same music that they've been listenin' to for the past... whatever amount of years, when the music switched over [91/92] it's like you can't even come with anything new. They're not puttin' their ear to the music anymore. When you're sayin' lyrics that burn half of those simpleton lyrics that are playing on your rotation, on your radio dial and you don't get no respect for that then something's wrong. It's backwards.



So where was that turning point or the "switch over" in rap music, when did the "righteous" era end?

I think the turning point was where the companies and the artists realized that doing music with some kind of "message" attached to it - I can't always say "message" cause it makes the music seem so corny, yknowwhat?msayin'. It's not like "message" is something that bore you or dull you. One thing that gave us more audience when we were X Clan was like "Well damn! Y'all talk all that shit and y'all are freaky! Y'all are usin' funk music and y'all just don't care. It's not like y'all have a religion attached to y'all shit but y'all are very serious guys." But a lot of positive artists were bumping into like, "Yo man, when I speak the message I don't know what kind of music to do cause I can't rhyme like that to the Hip Hop beat." But why not? It's supposed to be naturally in your blood. When I flip any kind of lyric. Anywhere. Freestyle whatever! It's always on a level. It never gotta be like I gotta talk about fifty history books or explain how a pyramid was built in order to be on a level. You know just sayin' poetic lyrics that don't insult the listener, is positive enough. And that's where it's all backward now, people have it wrong.

And now that you're back on the scene, I've read some reviews for Dark Sun and this one cat straight dissed it. Talkin' about how the music is boring, not like that old X Clan shit with the George Clinton shit and whatever...

Look, you know what the beef was before. Now, they would tell me like, "Oh man, y'all should keep samplin' George Clinton and samplin' beats that people have used." And I was like, "Yo man, FUCK that, I'll sample what feels good to me." That [X Clan] shit is what I was rhyming to at block parties and goin' freestyle and shit like that, I didn't care. So now that I come with all original music, you ask the person who disses it and say, "Can you find a sample on that, that you can go and find?" Yknowwhat?msayin' (chuckling) You can't find none of my shit. I don't give a fuck if you're a break collector. I got break collectors here who go insane when they hit towns. And you can't find one break on there. Unless I give it to you. If I don't give it then you can't find it. So that's original, that's like, half the beats that I find on the radio station... Yo, I could listen to the station for ten minutes and go find each one of the original records. [pause] And play it. [pause] Instantly. You can't do that to my music, bro. That's why I say, "What is originality and what truly is the fuck up?" You know, they want me to fuckin' sample one minute, the next minute they don't want me to. What do they want me to do? They wanna puppet me now and make me like a bitch! Yknowwhat?msayin', for sampling and shit, I gotta be fucked up now! If the music is wack then say it's wack. But if it isn't up to your expectations of me doin' somethin' with the Doobie Band or some shit yknowwhat?msayin' then don't diss me. You know, that's why people don't do the music that I do because you always gotta receive fucked up comments in the background.

So tell me who's all in the Dark Sun Riders.

The Dark Sun Riders are the council that rides with me, it's an organization that we have labelled The House of the Eclipse - The Dark Sun House. These are the Dark Sun Riders. Now these are gentlemen who specifically are here to council me while I travel. If I'm planting the seeds of evolution, if I'm going to pre-empt myself on a speaking engagement or anything. Master China, my instructor for years, you know instead of walking around with a buddha priest monk who teaches me kung fu or some shit, I walk around with a brother who's been with me through wars. Yknowwhat?msayin'. And then have Ultraman. I don't have a producer just to make me some beats, I have a cat that's with me at all times who understands like, "Look when I make a beat for him, I can't make no ordinary shit." And he's also a break fiend. Yknowwhat?msayin', he goes and searches the depths of hell for the rarest shit to say like, "Look man, music like this was disrespected. We need to bring music like this back and we can have Influence." Not to take it and say, "Well, let's redo it and use the chorus so people will understand that we can get down and shake our booty too." We're not with that. Yknowwhat?msayin'? It's like, "Give me something to get influenced off that's ruff and rare." And they'll find it. DJ Mate is the engineer. He's the brother that take the frequencies and does nothing with them.

Word. I just realized that you don't have any curses on your whole album... except in "Bro J's Theme" right? "Alin't no hocus pocus fake ass shit, I'm payin' dues. So skip Impressin' chart charts for my hits. Abnorm will form, will sight the deal. Underground invasion tell me shit ain't stinkin' real."

It was referring to the industry as shit. It was referring to something, instead of just talkin'

shit like, "Fuck it, fuck it, fuck it!" It wasn't like that for us. That's something that a lot of radio people are coming back sayin', "Look man this album is strictly play quality man." It's radio friendly but it's just to get the response from it. If I'm not shootin' under the table money at these radio stations and shit then I'm not gonna get the play they say I'm gonna get. That's why the industry has become very backwards like that now because it's about a lot of play right now, as far as "rotation" is concerned. People are paying for that. That's why a lot of independent music gets played right now because they can spend straight dollars off the street to get assured play on the station. Shit that you see that should never be a fuckin' hit in the fuckin' world and I can't even understand it but after a while, you keep hearin' that shit, it has to be a hit somewhere so you go and buy it. Some people are gullible like that. But I'm not gullible like that, I know the game. I know the fact that if you take money from the streets - drug money cause half the rappers are tellin' you what they do, they hustle - if you give a hustler \$200,000 and you talk about "produce a album," he'll take fifty and make two hundred more. Then he'll take twenty to a radio promotion guy and say, "Look, I got a salary for you. Five g's a week for the next... whatever... to get my record on rotation and keep it there. And don't move it. Leave me a space so everyone I bring an artist from my label, I have another five g's for you." You think he's gonna say no? He'll say, "Aw, I love this record! This is a hot record! All of the street people love it!" And then the higher people in the radio stations will say like, "Oh no, I don't like the record but he says it's hot on the street so keep playin' it." They don't care. They don't fuckin' care. As long as their station stays number one and the ratings stay cool and they make that paper man - nobody gives a fuck man.

What do you listen to nowadays?

I listen to everything man because I can't listen to rap music all day because all that shit is strange, the shit that's available, some of that shit is strange. I listen to rock music, I listen to classical music, I listen to everything bro. But when I wanna lock down into the music that I'm in, as far as a participant, only a few artists right now are comin' up. But a lot of people are learnin' their grounds. As far as, a lot of artists that were talkin' a lot of shit are now comin' up like dance groups, providing dance music for clubs strictly. I mean even the first single that Tupac put out was a club song. He's gettin' off of a lot of that crazee shit and leaving it on his album. So they're changin' up shit, a lot of people are changin' up shit. And that other shit is strange. I heard a kid sayin' the other day, "Yo I'll fuckin' roll up in your house and kill your kids..." and all kinds of shit. **ON MAIN PLAY RADIO.** And then they fuck with me! I'm like "Yo man fuck that!" I feel funny when I curse to y'all motherfuckers! Y'all gonna make me believe that a nigguh'll come over here, tell me to lay on the floor and shoot my kids! And y'all gonna play that shit? A female [rhymers] was talkin' about she layin' all motherfuckin' types of drug dealers and give 'em pussy cause she don't give a fuck, all kinds of shit man. The girl [rhyming] about "I'll come down a nigguh throat, fuck it." It's like, "Whoa! You feel you got it like that on your first record? You feel like your sales are gonna be so deep that you can come out and say anything off the top of your mouth." And she said, "Yeah, fuck that, I'm right!" And she said, "That's fucked up. But I don't call names. I let them see their actions from where I'm seein' it. I'm seein' like, 'Look if I didn't know your name, I'm a call out what you did. And you tell me if it's right or wrong.' You gonna come out with a group of motherfuckers, you gonna come out with one nigguh who's in the middle of controversy, you gonna tell all kind of shit on this record about cummin' on a nigguh neck and pullin' guns with him and all kinds of shit... givin' 'em a female aspect of the nigguh who's fame you're ridin', like a fame dick - You gonna ride that dick into the industry and say, 'Fuck it! And leave me established as one of the monumental women of Hip Hop!' Now what the fuck is that?! That means that I can take a hooker off the street, who lives the shit for real bro... I could put a funky beat under her ass and talk about her everyday livin' and make a platinum seller. Word! You see where I'm comin' from? Now what I'm supposed to be sayin' to you is, "positive message." And now when people don't wanna hear that, I say "Well damn, y'all deal with the reality everyday, why can't you face it?" So they'll put my fuckin' music at the bottom of the barrel to say "Dark Sun, I love you J man - and all that other shit man - but right now, the 'Big' is sellin'... um the 'Doin' It' is sellin'... the such and such is sellin'." I'm like, "Fuck that, let me step into the arena and battle for mine cause I guarantee you that once these people see my lyrics on a video scale and once people really pick up my album and understand where I'm comin' from and really get to see and read interviews, I think all that [other] shit'll change. I've got a stern feelin' for that.

Tell me about the other groups that are comin' out from Dark Sun.

Verbal Gnostics is like many groups in one place. I got groups on there like the VoidMen

and then Mother Nature and all kinds of different heads that are goin' to be comin' up. Earthcore productions will be producing the whole legion of Verbal Gnostics. There's a lot of planning involved in the whole situation, this is just the first presentation of what we want to do. I mean if I can't do it for myself then I can't push any artists.

True, true...

I have to pay dues for myself, like Andre Harrel wouldn't be who he is unless he had Jeckyl and Hyde. Y'knowwhat'sayin' so I know I have to go back into mine and say, "Well, I can't do it all of just bein' down with X Clan, I gotta be able to dive into the new age industry and make this music work." And then I can bring other artists or I'm just gonna put everybody in a boat that's gonna sink. And that's stupid. I see too many artists do that. I watch them... look at the way they just dissed Guru. He came out with the jazzmatazz, doin' shit with Chakka Khan and shit... and that's good music! Y'knowwhat'sayin' and his shit didn't get the acclaim for what it was but internationally he's the shit. But here, it's like people look at him funny. So when he brought his production crew, they dissed the whole shit. They just dissed the whole crew, it was something that people didn't even hear. Some Ill Kid Records or some shit. And they just dissed it. One kid dissed it like, "Aw man, this is wack. I've never heard something so wack in my life." They just went all out on him. You never heard no more from their crew. They just took the girl, Bahamadia and just blew up. Premier took her and said, "Fuck it. Just let the female go." She's gonna pick up instantly cause female DJs and shit like that are gonna pick up on these females. Females will stick together. The female part of your project don't have to worry 'bout shit. And that's deep. I mean, you gotta look at it... Dogg Pound... when they come to rock, the two people that rock the most are Snoop and Rage. Not Dre. Not any of them other motherfuckers, they all come off but yo- Rage and Snoop come off. Especially here in New York. Rage comes off b. I never heard nobody sing that shit so loud. They [at the Source Awards] were tryin' to boo their whole west coast shit, but Snoop come on- they went crazy. When Rage came on- they went crazy kid! "RAGE!" Everybody was singin' that shit kid. It was crazy. I was like, "Yo man, look at what's happening. They'll take the hypiest part of your group and the female and support it and say fuck everybody else." Where's 45 King man? Why isn't he the best fuckin' producer in the fuckin' music industry. Everybody was dancin' to his shit. They took LaTifah. And was gone. You don't even see him anymore. They just took the entity and left. Whatever she says, goes. "I say Naughty By Nature, so Naughty By Nature is the shit. You didn't even hear their album and they got a Grammy. What the fuck? It's like, 'Yo man, what's sacred and what isn't.' You know, that's my question to the whole rap industry. 'What's sacred to you and what isn't?' What is truly good Hip Hop? What makes you say, 'Yo that's dope.' Is it just that everybody says it? Is it that it's a party tune? What the fuck is it? I wanna know. What the fuck is the chemistry of good rap music made off? Cause obviously I don't know. I thought it was about lyrics. I thought it was about having lyrics... and beats that mesh with your lyrics. If I'm talkin' about water, the beats should be movin' like water. So I thought it was about that. But the way the industry is now, any fuckin' nigguh could get on a video man, sing somebody else's lyrics and go on to be the hit of the century and they don't even know who's responsible. They've never heard him go freestyle. They haven't heard shit. They'll just take it and go with it. They don't give a fuck man. I'm like, 'Yo man fuck that.' Look b, I'll tie nigguh up to do lyrics correctly bro. I'm a star carryin' lighter fluid and a match to light nigguh books on fire and shit. Nigguh are gonna be buggin' man. Nigguh ain't gonna like me god. They ain't gonna like me man. They're gonna be like, 'Yo that nigguh is crazy. That motherfucker came on stage and put lighter fluid on the stage and then lit it and ran that kid off stage. Word up. Ran that whole shit outta there.' Cause I don't care. You can't care cause those motherfuckers think they're bullgurdin' the industry with that bullshit. I'm not havin' it. And organized people think twice as much as a lazy, over blunted kid. If a kid drinkin' four quarts steppin' to me talkin' 'bout he wanna fight, I'll knock all of them quarts out his ass. You can't even move around with that type of shit in your system. You can't even stand up straight with all that urd blinding your fuckin' eyes. They don't even know how to calm that shit down and fast from that shit and be cool for a minute. Like when you go on the road, you don't carry a thousand pounds of urd with you because they'll roll on you on a drug charge when you get into a town. You gotta think. Every town doesn't think the same. But nigguh think, 'Yo I'm paid, fuck it, it doesn't matter. If I get in jail I'll just pay my bond.' But yo man, a record is a record and sometime they're gonna change that law on your ass and lock you down. Because of the influence that you have on people. Look at all the top artists in the industry now caught up in controversy. Some of them just start up controversy purposely because if your name gets centered in a newspaper or something- people'll buy your records.

How much has shit really changed from the Chuck D, BDP days and how much has stayed the same?

With me being down with the original Clan, I know what it's like to roll in a show with thirty to fifty heads on the stage. I look at the Wu Tang and I see the same thing. I look at the Dogg Pound and see the type of organization they have, I know what I had when I was with Blackwatch. We had our own Rage, we had a Isis. We had all types of other artists in the backlog. We had our main group which was X Clan, which was like their Dogg Pound or whatever the case may be. I see what's happenin' nowadays. I can see how people take what we've done and make it happen for themselves. So when you call people from back in the '88-'90 era, the mentality was different. The way we paid dues was different. It was like, "Yo man I don't wanna hear you rhyme, get up on stage right now and we'll do some mad freestyle shit. And your DJ better be funky too cause I'm not hearin' none of that DAT shit." Back in '88 and '90 it was forbidden to do R&B with your rap music. It was forbidden. It was called crossing over. It is now the law of the land to sing with an R&B artist or else you don't have a hit on the pop charts. This is the type of bullshit you gotta go through. I thought the game was don't crossover. Now you're tellin' me I gotta get a girl to sing my name, I can't make some, "DJs and MCs!! Can't touch Brotha J!" I can't make no shit like that, I gotta have some female singin' [in his best r&b diva voice] "Oooh Brother... you're the best... rub me down... da da da da..." That's corny. Y'knowwhat'sayin'? That's corny. I gotta have somebody sing my name all kind of ways and shit and rub her pussy on the fuckin' film and shit in order to get my point across. Man FUCK that! I'm not with none of that shit man. They can make money off that shit all day but I'm a have me some Brides of Funkenstein type shit. I'm a have me some next level Parliament type band on my stage and they ain't gonna be singin' no r&b.

So what about those people who are expecting Dark Sun to be the continuation of the Clan?

It's like, if you're lookin' for me to come with Clan then you're gonna be waitin' a long time and you gonna be missin' a lot of good music. Cause we're puttin' out the shit right now. But the album is hard for the people to get so I had to get up with my record company. People didn't know the album is out to demand it. Because it's caught up in the rest of this bullshit, it's like you've gotta fight a double war when you're goin' out right now with this type of music that I'm doin' because people don't know. The generation that buys music now might not have been Clan fans so they may not know who the fuck I am all together. So you can't go and say, "X Clan, X Clan, X Clan." Cause some people'll say, "Who the fuck was that?" or they say, "Oh it's the wild nigguh with them earrings in their nose." [laughter] or that's, "To the east! To the east!" That's all they know. Y'know and "sisseeee!" and all that shit and I'll say yo man, fuck all that. I ain't no sissy and this ain't no fuckin' time for no crossroads. I left the crossroads and I'm not with no Clan no more. It's now a different era. I'm never gonna switch. You'll never catch me in no forty dancers on stage and no Prince butt jeans, y'knowwhat'sayin', flippin' no r&b shit. You'll never catch me doin' that... You understand, nene. I don't give a fuck what happens. If they do that to me, I'm drugged and I'm bein' puppeted y'knowwhat'sayin'. They know to trust me. "I know that kid right there is gonna come off with some lyrics of death and I know his production is gonna be on time and I know I'm gonna get a quality cut when I buy his shit. Everytime." That's all they gotta know brother. That's the guarantee that I wanna give the audience that listens to this music. That all [humbly] I don't wanna do no more or more less. I don't wanna go platinum in a minute. I'm just like, yo man know that you're guaranteed to get your quality piece of music that says, "yo, I could get into this, one way or the other." That's it. I'm not gonna give you no wack shit man. Y'know, that's how I feel, I don't know how the audience feels man. Y'knowwhat'sayin' I don't know what the fuck they think about man.

"From verb to vibe, from dark to sun, it's the freaky deely tones of the god Tehun. If the mortals don't get it and it don't seep in, resurrect me with my mic and I'll go at it again."

Artist: Dark Sun Riders
Label: Island
Album: Seeds Of Evolution
Prod: Beat Ass. & Soul Katz
Members: Bro J, Ultraman, DJ MATE & Master China
Home: Flatbush, NY

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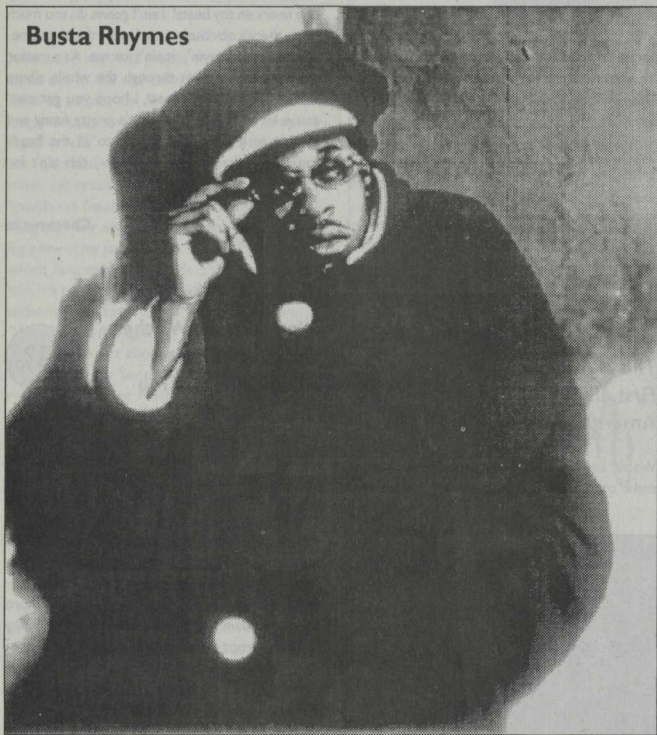
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PRE:VIEWS

long play

Busta Rhymes



Busta Rhymes

The Coming
Elektra

83%

I didn't believe Busta had enough skill to go beyond that "dungeon dragon" style. Much to my enjoyment, BR delivers the "ruckus" with limitless energy, acute focus, versatility and tight ass production. Aside from some irrelevant skits, intros and outros and a couple of fast forwards, the album has a lot of big time strengths. The album begins strongly with "Do My Thing" and "Everything Remains Raw" which he brings a new flow style to the world. The Zhané track is an immediate fast forward and "Hot Fudge" is way too "gaseous", not able to ground itself at any point. On "Ill Vibe" Busta kicks freestyle like lyrics over a track produced by the Ummah (Q Tip, Jay Dee, and Shaheed Muhammed) that's stationary but vibrating and humming. Q Tip joins Busta and kicks his vibe and doesn't give a fuck. Another track to mention is "Still Shinin'" which he uses as a reference point to earlier "Leaders" work. The Leaders feature of "Keep It Movin'" proves (as did all LONS material) what can actually occur when egos are in check and focus on group prevails. Themes built on solid chorus concepts, different views of that

theme by vocal embroidery, solidify what a crew track could be. This track **feels right**. Everybody's equal, working together and you can sense the fun and the energy. This **hardly ever** occurs on Hip Hop tracks. Busta Rhymes is an elemental force of immense talent. He has proven himself as a groundbreaking soloist, promising producer, astute judge of talent and a team player. This is a powerful piece of work; many heads will be caught off guard (myself included). Rhymes flips shit with an identity very few have naturally, very few understand or very few cultivate.

-Mr. Bill

Smoother Da Hustler

Once Upon A Time
In America
Profile

74%

Straight representin' Brownsville, Brooklyn, Saratoga Ave, Smoother is straight hustlin' his rhymes to the ears of listeners, who have been awaiting his debut album since he dropped the classic, "Broken Language." On the album, songs like, "My Brother My Ace" and "Murderfest" build on that shit and on "My Brother..." Smoother and his brother Trigger take that shit to the next level, bustin' line for line like few if any, have before. The album is tight on a whole but may turn some ears off and receive straight disses for songs like "Only Human" and others which are straight r&b tracks. Not to dis Smoother's flexibility or DR Periods creativity by any means, but I strongly feel that if he had come with more tracks like "My Brother..." and the others mentioned, it would've been somewhat of a classic but we'll never know. By compromising for assured radio play, Smoother may have even lowered his chance of high record sales because to the average listener, some of the shit sounds either mad corny or generic, which Smoother is neither. DR Periods beats are tight no matter what type of shit he's cookin', showin' he has mad experience behind him and a prosperous future ahead. Smoother's lyrics are on point on every joint and some of his doper rhymes are on those dreaded r&b tracks but I gotta say it again, those r&b beats that are gonna fuck with some heads spellin' him as just another corny niggah. Interludes with

his moms talkin' some real life shit to him and little shorty's askin' him questions about some other shit, give the album a personal vibe, leavin' you feelin' like you've known Smoothe since he was a shorty. I'm sayin'... besides those r&b joints, every other song is bomb, including "Fuck What You Heard" and the other bomb ass track I need to mention, for it's concept and the whole shit, is "Dollar Bill" which features DV alias Christ flowin' some of that Ticalesque harmonizin' shit that makes me high! That joint is my joint. Straight up and down, Smoothe the Hustler gets respects from Elements, niiiinniiiiight!

-Freestyle Craze

Sadat X

Wild Cowboys Loud

89%

"This solo thing I'm doin' here is real to me. The most serious thing in my life I could say up to this point..." No joke, Sadat's back. Serious and phat only this time with the Wild Cowboys on his debut solo album of the same name. Sadat aka Derrick X, of Brand Nubian fame, flows over some phat ass production handled mostly by the Diggin' In The Crates team and plus a fly track supplied by the Beatminerz and Pete Rock amongst others. If you know Sadat's flows, you'll know his shit is one of a kind and this niggah be sayin' some shit. "Move On" is probably the tightest track for

me but ShowBiz's joint "Stages and Lights" is the shit too. "I never been gold but I got the platinum fame." Yknowwhatmean. The other track to look for is the Beatminerz joint, where Sadat freaks an interview X style. Word. Not to forget, "Game's Sober" featuring the Money Boss Players- their shit is ill. The album is about eleven or twelve songs deep and ain't nothin' too shabby about any of the tracks. Puba and Sadat freak the chemistry on one joint and needless to say, it's fly. I like it when Puba rhymes more serious cause he comes off witty rather than comical. All in all, this is a good solo effort by Sadat and I gotta say I like it better than Puba's solo's. The cuts he uses are fresh too (e.g. "I been doin' my own thing" by Groove Theory on "Lump Lump" which was cut up by Roc Raider) and his new posse members rhyme tight too. Buy it and bump it.

-Checkmate

(PS. - my ratings may vary according to degree of highness at time of review)

Kwest the Madd Ladd

This Is My First Album American Records

60%

Word. Lemme start off by sayin': This cat is on some other shit, yknowwhatmean. I first heard

his shit a couple of years ago when he released the single "101 Things To Do While I'm With Your Girl." Two years later and amazingly still with the same label, he hits us with his whole album... and I gotta tell you- not much has changed. You gotta admire Kwest for stickin' to his style and all, in an extremely trendy Hip Hop world. However, that's where my admiration ends... Basically, this kid raps a whole bunch about sexin'... sexin', sexin' and more sexin', all with a comedic flare. It's like the Fresh Prince crossed with Luke usin' witty one liners on toy beats! I ain't gonna dis too much cause there's obviously a market for this shit somewhere, I'm just sayin'... it ain't for me. As a matter of fact, I couldn't get through the whole album myself. To my man Kwest, I hope you get over cause for that type of shit- it's pretty funny and all, in a kick it kinda way- but to all the heads lookin' for that hardcore ill shit- this ain't for y'all.

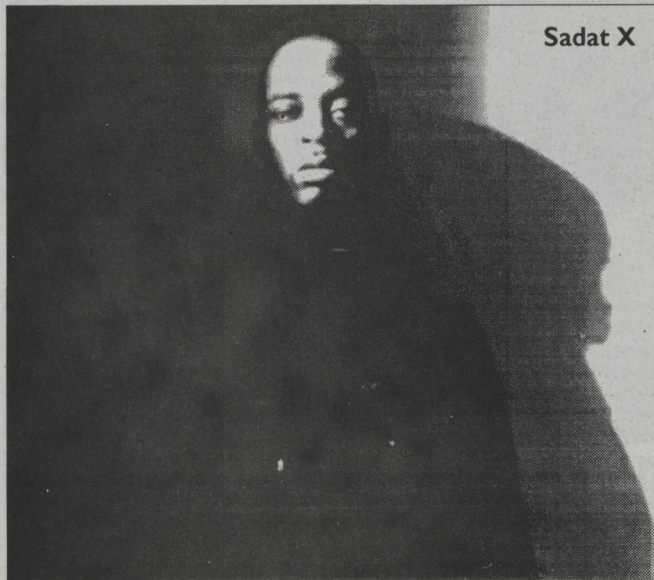
-Checkmate

Afrika Bambaata

Warlocks and Witches, Computer Chips, Microchips and You Profile

83%

There are very few people, let alone heads who have the respect from their peers and the credentials to match it. Afrika Bambaata's impact on the birth growth and maintenance of the culture are monumental. The compilation/project is an excellent reference for what Bam's contribution's exactly are. "This Is Time Zone" begins the album with that "Oh-so-familiar-oh-so-good" horn loops and Bam flippin' shit Vocoder style. "Funky Beeper" drops bombs again with simple recipes of vocal, guitar and beeper beeps. "Throw Your Hands Up" marks the first profanity I've heard on Bam tracks. Queen Asia rips shit without being on that frontin' female shit you can at times get sick of. Boom! She just rips, doesn't give a fuck, has hella confidence and mic control with a deep, thumpy track and dope vocal sample "Can't Hear Ya!" The wheels begin to fall off here with the "Funky Worm" outro to "...Hands Up", marking some inconsistency to follow in successive tracks. Overall, Bam touches everything (musically) but jungle and trip hop (hmmm). There's brilliance and disaster. But Afrika Bambaata's mission of uniting all people takes another step forward. No one in the culture showcases such diversity in musical influence with such true humility, reference to the original source and reverence to the original source. There are no "flava's of the month" here production wise, which is both refreshing but also dated (and critically risky). This is one of Hip Hop's original cornerstones - "Give credit where credit is due!". Don't be embarrassed! You



Sadat X

bite! Whether or not those 80's sounds become invaluable to future 2000 heads is open to debate. Until then, you must learn grasshoppers!

-Mr. Bill

De La Soul

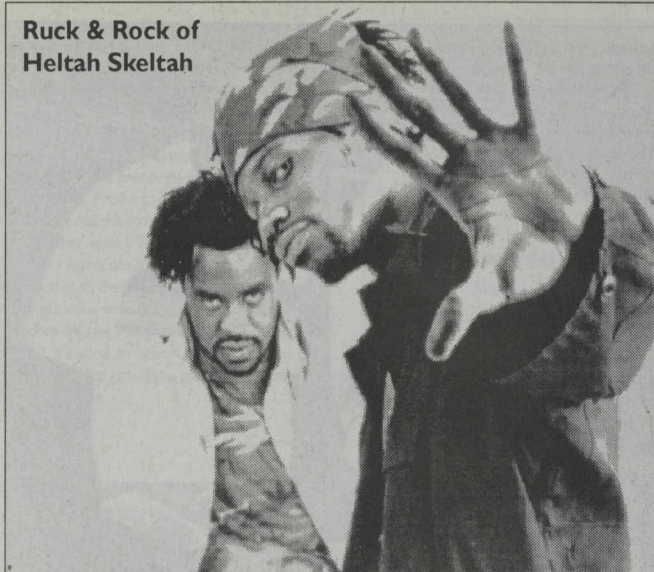
Stakes Is High
Tommy Boy

90%

How many Hip Hop groups still exist in '96 that came out in '88 and before? You can use one hand to count. On *Stakes Is High*, De La Soul keeps it realer than any body who ever screamed "keep it real!" How? They keep it **right**. They are contributors, innovators, commentators and most importantly **fans** of this Hip Hop shit. Sounds like I'm about to go off on them huh? Well hang on, here we go... Let me start out by naming a few of my favorite cuts on the album: "Intro" which is some ol' freestyle shit; "Supaemcee" which is retarded; "Sunshine" the '96 summertime anthem; "Dog Eat Dog" a referral to the world; "Vonce Again (Long Island)" Pos' solo joint; "Betta Listen" some shit about girls; "The Bizness" featuring Common Sense; "Big Brother Beat" also retarded, featuring Most Def; "Island Degrees" nice, nice; "Brakes" some ol' real life shit; "Itzsowezee (Hot)" summertime anthem #2; "4 More" the Zhané track that's way better than Busta's; "Baby, Baby, Oohh Baby" some more retarded shit; "Poni Ride" with the ill "DJ" break it down! loop, true genius; "Stakes Is High" social commentary; "Dinnit" summertime anthem #3; and finally the last track "Down Syndrome" which is... well... retarded. Overall, Pos and Dove and Mase (who doesn't really do too much on this album) are the epitome of the ideal Hip Hop group- Over eight years, a platinum debut album, three more gold albums, respected to the hilt by all the "real" heads and keepin' the shit real without ever sayin' it. It's like Prodigy from Mobb, he ain't never gotta say in his rhymes that he's got ill rhymes, he's just got 'em, yaknowhat'msayin'? De La ain't gotta say shit except put out sickening album after album, while changin' with the times but they're in a whole other time zone. Maybe a couple hours ahead of everybody else. Anyway, the shit is the bomb, production, lyrics, concepts, whatever! De La was my favorite shit before Wu came out. With this shit, I think De La's bumped them out as top seed. You may still be listenin' to this album in '98 thinkin', "Man those were the good ol' days." That is if De La has retired or something. On the real, this is De La's tightest album yet and if you sleep, then you might as well listen to Green Day. De La Soul= Worry free Hip Hop.

-FreeStyle Craze

Ruck & Rock of Heltah Skeltah



twelve 'inch

Heltah Skeltah
"Operation Lockdown"
b/w "Da Wiggy"
Priority

88%

The madness has begun. The year is the ninety-now and not too many groups represent the real with an original flavor. Heltah Skeltah is not one of those groups by far. Big Rock and Ruk, the power forward and the center of the Fab Five, have come forth with some marvellous shit. "Operation Lockdown" is an ominous, dark, shady track courtesy of E-Swift of the Liks which embodies harp vibe, making the track some of that "yo that's that shit" type shit. Ruck and Rock stay consistent building off each other while killing any, "they just sound like Black Moon" stupid shit, with contrasting but complimentary laidback/aggressive deliveries that compliment the beat "to the tits." The B-side track, "Da Wiggy" is a Beatminers standard instrumental with Ruck and Rock freakin' the lyrics back n forth making for a good duo joint but the a side blew me wide open, so... No need to go too much into, their shit is correct.

-Kemo

Large Professor
"Mad Scientist"
b/w "Spacey"
Geffen

78%

I'm a come right out and say it. I'm upset with Extra P on this 12 inch. It's bangin' still, don't get me wrong, it's just that after the very long ass anticipation and calibre of guest appearances (like Tribe, Lord Finesse and that "Git Off the Bullshit" song) I thought his first single would be "da shit." "Mad Scientist" is cool but it's just cool, the beat is dope but the lyrics weren't too there and to top it off his third verse is really his first one. That shit right there is weak to me but maybe the label had something to do with that. But whatever, it was done. The beat is his own creation and with no question is the joint as are all his beats. The shit bumps. The flip side features a song called "Spacey" where Large gets a couple of unknowns to join him on the mic (perhaps Selo and Van!) and a kid named Tony Rome who hooked up the beat. Shit is fresh from start to finish and the beat is obviously the inspiration for the title. There's also another cut named, "Listen (Blast Off)" which is really just a filler beat. Not too necessary on a 12 inch if you ask me. Overall, it's his own fault that the Large Professor has made my expectations of him so high and if his soon-to-be-released LP, "The LP" lives up to them then we'll have ourselves a Hip Hop classic, no doubt.

-Kemo the Labrat



Geechi Grace & Cochese of Camp Lo

Blahzay Blahzay

"Pain I Feel"

Fader

72%

This east New York duo blew the spot with their debut release, "Danger" and all it's remixes and have returned with a follow-up single. "Pain I Feel" is their second attempt to "blow the spot" and not to say it's not good or anything but it's not as heartfelt attempt for me as the "Danger" single. I expected something a little more underground, more raw elements involved. Instead I received a "bouncy", "clubby" type track with lyrics that don't shine very bright over the instrumental. It sounds like I'm dissin' but I'm just sayin' it's not classic material, mostly cause the lyrics aren't all there. The chorus is cut by P.F. usin' a classic Extra P line "You don't know the pain I feel" and another classic cut, Channel Live's Tuffy "Cause there's all these fake rappers makin' steady hits, fuck that!" Overall Blahzay knows how to make enjoyable, feel good, club jams without relying on that other bullshit like singing choruses etc. The most interesting part was at the end when the DJ does his thang. Their LP "Blah, Blah, Blah" is about to drop, so we'll soon see if they can bring some good food to the picnic or if they just bring the napkins. I'll probably be let down but hey, that would be nothing new.

-Kemo the Labrat

Camp Lo

"Kill 'Em Softly"

Profile

78%

Who the fuck is Camp Lo you askin'? Two cats from New York who are about to bring their shit to the arena. 19 year-old Geechi Grace and 21 year-old Cochese are from New York and you may have heard their track "Coolie High" that was supposedly supposed to "get you wide" but it didn't do much for me. The beat was kinda wack but the rhyme flows were kinda nice, I didn't really notice until I flipped the acapella on another beat then it's like their lyrics just jumped out at me and I said, "Damn. I think they're on some shit." Word up. "Kill 'Em Softly" is a better demonstration of these two mc's potential but I have a feelin' it's still not their best shit. They've got an ill flow that they call the "Donald Goines" style, now I don't know who the fuck that is- excuse me- all I know is that they got me wide on their shit. "Kill 'Em Softly" needs to be checked, don't be thrown off by "Coolie High" and I heard they're on the new De La shit. Word? I think Geechi says it best when he says in the bio, "Camp Lo is straight from the heart, no gimmies. We are really 'Coolie High'." People with short eyes try to sleep on you, doubt you, take you for less than your really worth. People with short eyes better look out for Camp Lo." Yo, my eyes are like, seven feet long. I'm awake.

-FreeStyle Craze

Xzibit

"Paparazzi"

Loud

81%

"Once again it's the Likwitation crew and we return for you like this..." Word! We all heard of Xzibit by now, he's guest appeared on several Alkaholiks and King Tee tracks ("Damn", "No Hand Outs" and "Freestyle Ghetto"). So what can we say 'bout this cat 'cept that he's from the west and he could rhyme regardless. This is the first single from Xzibit who undoubtedly has an album in the works as we speak. The song itself isn't bad at all, with my man flippin' some shit... "It's a shame! Nigguzh in the rap game, only for the money and the fame. Extra large!" Word, we heard it all before but it's something that ain't been said enough. The production is bagin' and features an opera/Raekwon style loop of some strings and singin' and shit. Xzibit himself flows a bit like Tash except with a deeper voice - what you expect - same clique. All in all, the song's dope enough to get rotation on his box however, this nigguzh probably got fresher shit lurkin' on his album. Keep lookin' for Xzibit...

-Checkmate

The Roots

"Section" b/w "Clones"

Geffen

88%

This Illadelph crew is known for makin' live beats, not just live beats but **live** beats with a live ass band and anybody who's been to a Roots show knows how live the shit can get. The newest work from the Roots is "Section" and "Clones". The a side has Black Thought flowin' over butter production, that sounds like they've sampled themselves this time around, givin' it that phatter feel. I thought "Sections" was alright but the b side! Now this is some shit, no doubt. First things first, the beat is sick! When I first heard it, I was trippin'. This track lands somewhere in the land of all time remarkable jams, production wise and lyrically, no doubt. The flows are super tight, constructed by M.A.R.S., Black Thought and Dice Raw. The track is put together so nicely with a sort of "breather" between each rhyme to get you ready for the next rhyme, but you're never really that ready. I'm sure a lot of heads will pick this shit up and bug off it for a while so needless to say, I can't wait for their next shit! For everybody who's ever slept on the Roots because of the "live band" ignorance, open your eyes or else dope Hip Hop will just keep passin' you by...

-Logic

PMD

"Rugged N Raw" Boondocks Records

86%

Live from the Squad Tower, Parrish Smith is about to blast off takin' shit to the next century. Through his evolution, it seems the mic doc has taken himself back to the core of hardcore. I know a lot of peeps who were disappointed with the last joints PMD released but I guarantee you, "no more music by the suckas." This joint, "Rugged N Raw" can only be described as "swoll." To a hardrock such as myself, I feel a sense of relief to hear Parrish bustin' them old classic "slow flower" flows straight up and down, "that b boy shit!" Not only does P come back with tight skills but yo! the production is where it should have been on his last album. I see now that he's been settin' motherfuckers up for a fall. "Rugged N Raw" possesses fat basslines and bengin' ass beats and PMD sounds nice like curry chicken on rice with some hot sauce on top. I'm lookin' forward to an album from Parrish Smith and remember, "approach with caution cause brothers pack jammies."

-Jeeps

Royal Flush

"Worldwide" Blunt

79%

"Worldwide, worldwide, whenever beef is startin'. Keep ya mind on Queens when the dogs start barkin'..." Yeah, Royal Flush from the Wasteland family and representing Queens seem to be dissin' right here. Some more of that east vs west type shit. Flush seems to be responding to Dogg Pound's "New York, New York" I guess. Damn, DPG got them New York niggahz trippin' huh... Anyway, the song itself is aight but Flush sounds like Nas without the same level of skills. Production on the track is pretty dope and as a whole, the shit is nice but nuttin' to get me too excited. Odds are however, if you listen to it you'll like it. It's got a catchy chorus and nice melodies. Best look out for Flush later though, I've got a feelin' he'll be back with the next shit.

-Checkmate

Above The Law

"100 Spokes" Tommy Boy

77%

"As I floss my 100 spokes it's no joke." For all of y'all who don't know, these niggahz is talkin' 'bout

rims - 100 spokes. Then again, if you know wuzup you probably know all about Above The Law, who are now on Tommy Boy. They first crashed on the scene around '89 with "Murder Rap" and since then have seen mad success on their last two albums. However, underground gossip has it rumored that their newest shit is extra tight... we'll see. "100 Spokes" is the first single and it's a lil' something to ride to. Production is handled by Cold 187um and features this sista takin' it to the bridge (I don't know her name.) The song's dope and all buy not what I appreciate ATL for. However, I also recognize that it's their first single so they probably tryin' to get some widespread play. I know the album is gonna be raw though, so look out. Other than that, it's good to hear K.M.G. and 187um again. So floss them rims if you got 'em and bump some ATL, no joke.

- Checkmate

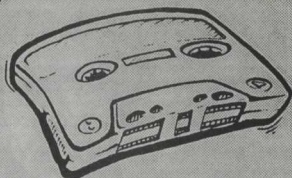


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De La Soul

Stakes Is High

Jay-Z w/ Foxy Brown

Ain't No Nigga

Sadat X

The Lump, Lump

Royal Flush

Worldwide

Real Live

Pay You Die

PMD

Rugged-n-Raw

Money Boss Players

Games

Xzibit

Paparazzi

Smoother Da Hostler

Phuck Whatcha Heard

Kasealz

Dreaded Fist

Heitah Skeitah

Operation Lockdown

Wu-Tang Clan (Cap & U God)

If it's Alright With You

Al Tariq

Do Yo Thing

25 Ta Life

La, La (Marly Marl remix)

Busta Rhymes w/ Rampage

Abandon Ship

Shyheim w/ Smoother, Trigger &

D.V. alias Christ

What Makes The World Go Round

Camp Lo

Kill 'Em Softly

The Roots w/ M.A.R.S. & Dloc Raw

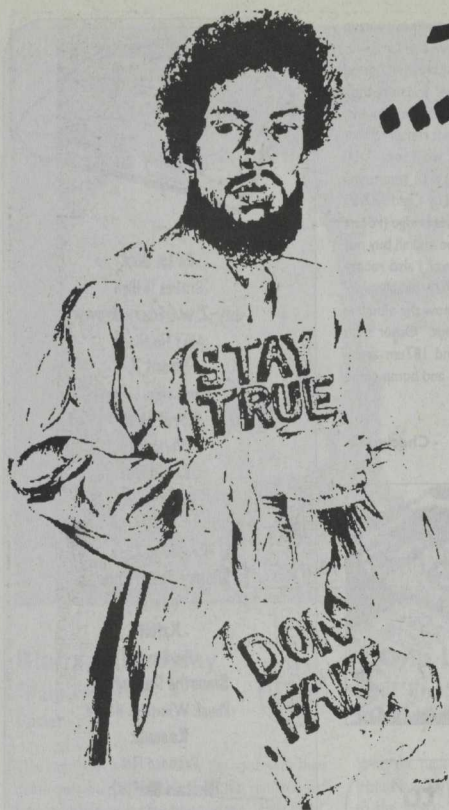
Clones

House of Pain w/ Sadat X

Heart Full of Sorrow

Bahawadla

Rugged Kuff



...Fakin' The Conversation!

by Upski

"What is the funk and how will I know if I'm faking it?"
- Del the Funky Homosapien (1991)

Two years later, people are still talking about "faking the funk" as though it meant something, as though Del had never even posed the question.

Funk is an aesthetic, a sensibility.

Funk is not something that is possible to fake.

It can be mocked or misrepresented. It can be harnessed to create products (such as recorded music) which are bought and sold. It can be attacked and ridiculed - aren't these what we really mean when we say "faking the funk"?

Haven't we just been using the wrong verb?

And if so (here comes the bigger question), what do we *really* mean by the whole REAL vs. FAKE campaign in hip-hop? Crazy Legs wearing a "True Skool" t-shirt... KRS-ONE asking "How many REAL hip-hoppers in the place right about now?" Aren't these just our attempt as a community to pass moral judgment - "to separate the good stuff from the junk" - without sounding corny?

There's no problem with that. No one doubts that KRS-ONE is a real hip-hopper, whatever that is, or that Crazy Legs is from the True Skool, whatever that is. The only problem: What the fuck is it?

The only problem, as Large Professor says: "We've got to be more precise." It's like Moses coming down off Mount Sinai with The Two Commandments: "Stay True," and "Don't Fake": Unless we can agree on what they mean in an actual situation, what's the point of even bringing them up?

Some will say that phrases like "fake" and "real" are intentionally vague and undefinable, that "We know what we mean" when we use them and defining them will stifle hip-hop by placing restrictions on it.

"Okay... Alice Walker, about this book title... it's so exact, are you sure you want to limit yourself to purple? You could be stifling your subject matter. Why not just call it *The Real Color* - real readers will know what you mean... Oh, Mr. Shakespeare, Romeo and Juliet? But this is a *universal* story: You don't want people to think it was limited to one couple! Let's call it *Real Love*... Mr. Haley, Mr. Haley, Mister Haley! Why are you trying to label this as an *autobiography*? It's so much more than just a life story! *The Real Malcolm X* - that's what you should call it..."

The creative side of hip-hop should never be stifled. Using more precise language doesn't stifle. It let's us say what we mean. If hip-hop is going to have a moral side, it must be specific enough to be useful. Otherwise, every time we say something like "Be true to the game," what the fuck are we even talking about!

And how can we begin to protect "Real hip-hop" from exploitation if we can't say exactly what it is that we are protecting? If we can't answer Del's question about how to tell the difference between real and fake, who are we to say that we ourselves aren't fake!

That's why authenticity is such a dead-end street. If we're gonna talk morals, let's keep the discussion in this atmosphere: Word is bond; pay your dues; don't front; don't bite; don't stop; don't forget where you came from; peace, unity love, and having fun; give credit where credit is due; show and prove; stop the violence; freedom of speak; don't wish on a four-leaf clover; do for self; it ain't where you're from it's where ya at; and give back to whoever made you what you are... (And it ain't always easy. Contradictory morals, such as "It ain't where ya from, it's where ya at," and "Don't forget where you come from" need some sorting out.)

But most morals just need to be brought down to Earth with specifics: What exactly are my dues? How must I pay them, in what form and to whom? When do I have to start paying them, and when do I get to stop and have other people paying dues to me? How are my dues different from someone else's of a different race or class? From a different city? At a different time? In a different hip-hop art form or in more than one art form? Why do I have to pay dues in the first place, and who's to say whether I'm in debt?

Until we begin posing and answering our moral questions at a more practical, precise, and specific level, what we're really mocking, misrepresenting, buying, selling, stifling, attacking, ridiculing, and yes, faking, is the whole conversation of what we believe in and how we want to live.

"Faking The Conversation" was taken from the Subway and Elevated Press book **Bomb The Suburbs** by William "Upski" Wimsatt. For more information or to order your own copy of **Bomb The Suburbs** write to:

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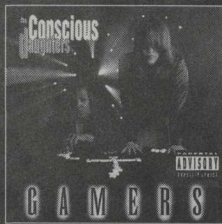
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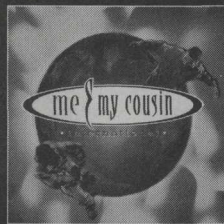
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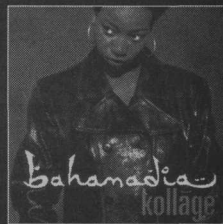
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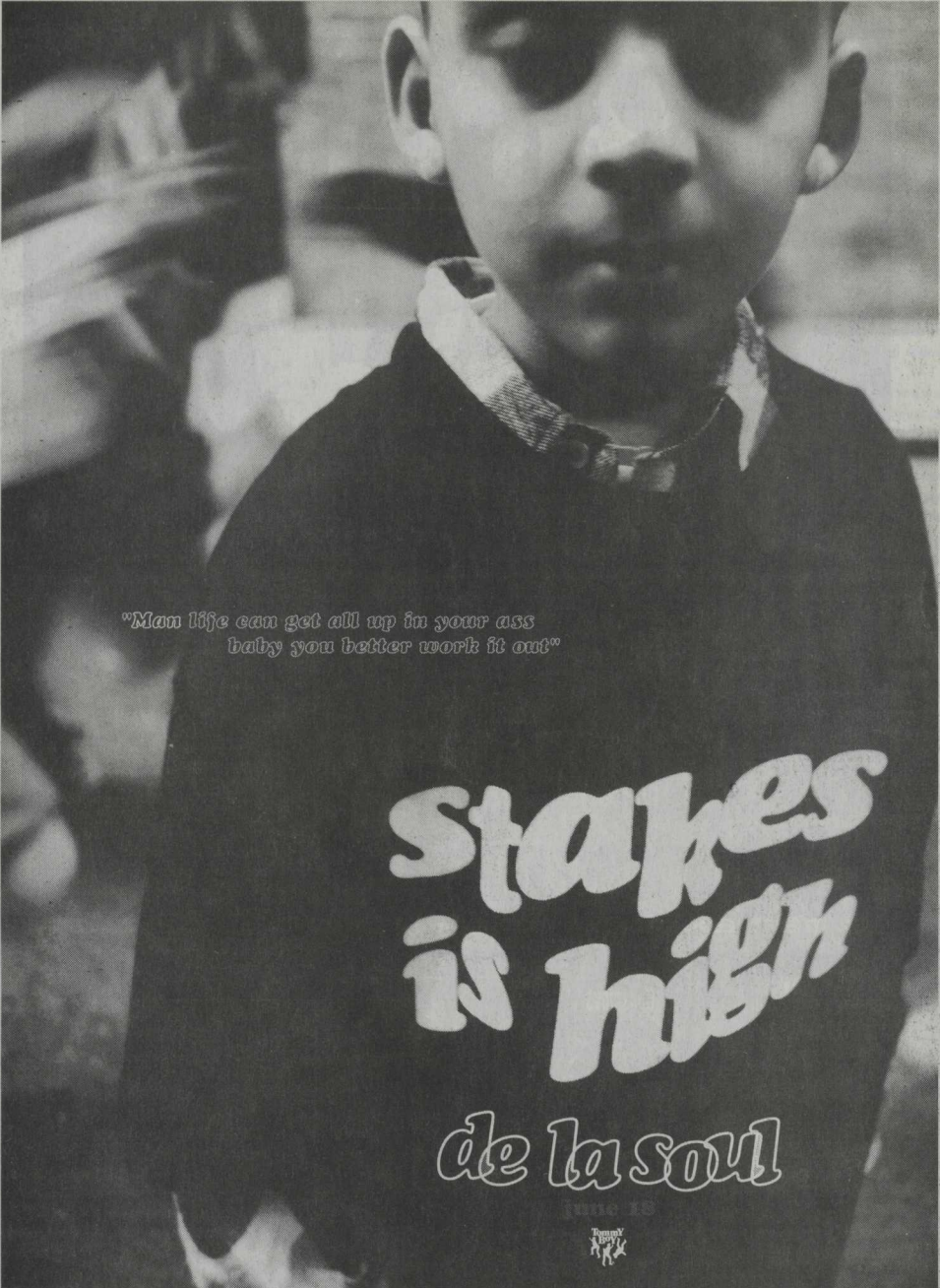
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"Man life can get all up in your ass
baby you better work it out"

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is high**

de la soul

June 18

